

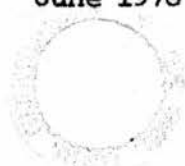
THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION AND PROCESS THEOLOGY
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO
THE THOUGHT OF CHARLES HARTSHORNE

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PREFACE

The purpose in writing this dissertation is simply to compare two things which have not been previously compared--the doctrine of creation and process theology, and in so doing, see if process theology puts forward an adequate and acceptable interpretation of this venerable doctrine. That such comparison can and should take place is obvious when one realizes the tremendous emphasis process thinkers place on their notion of creativity and the unique way in which they define all entities, including God, as 'self-created creatures.' Perhaps, it is outside influences that have determined that focus of process interests would be elsewhere. Linguistic analysis and neo-orthodox theology have joined forces in attacking metaphysics. These same two forces have made discussion of God and of Jesus Christ of immediate importance. Be this as it may, dialogue between process thinkers and traditional ones, on the subject of creation, is over-due.

Some of the terms in the title need definition. "Process theology" is the baptized offspring of process philosophy and possibly its only surviving heir. The progenitor of process philosophy is Alfred North Whitehead who first established himself in Europe as a mathematician and then switched subjects and continents, emigrating to the United States where he became one of the foremost philosophers of the first half of this century. The most important work in the second half of his career was an expansion of his 1927-28 Gifford

Lectures, delivered at the University of Edinburgh and published in 1929 under the title, Process and Reality. Even though Whitehead's ideas had been expressed earlier elsewhere, this was by far his most complete articulation of process philosophy.

If Whitehead is the progenitor of process thought, why does this dissertation pay particular attention to one of Whitehead's students, Charles Hartshorne? Whitehead's concerns were not primarily theological, but cosmological. Hartshorne's concerns are theological as indicated by an early and sustained interest in Anselm's ontological argument for the existence of God, which formed the basis of his theism. Hartshorne, much more than Whitehead, has defined and discussed God from a process point of view. Through his work, Whitehead's teachings have been expanded and revised both with original thought and insights gained from other persons. The understanding of God is one of the areas where Hartshorne takes many exceptions with the teaching of his mentor.

Hartshorne also deserves special consideration because he, for awhile, almost singlehandedly kept process thought alive. Process philosophy is now fifty years old but was largely ignored until the last fifteen years when opponents of the death of God theology revived an interest in it as an alternative system. Although he was not the only process thinker around in those thirty-five years of neglect, Hartshorne certainly was the most ardent and articulate spokesman for the cause.

"Traditional theology" is an umbrella term covering almost everything in Western theology which is not process thought. This

includes virtually the entirety of the tradition in which the Roman Catholic and Reformed churches stand. Needless to say, the people clustered by this term are a diverse group and might not be happy at being lumped together. From the process perspective, traditional theology has two basic characteristics: (1) an implicit or an explicit preference for being rather than becoming as the basic metaphysical description of reality (2) a 'monopolar prejudice' with regard to God which permits him to be conceptualized only in terms of abstract, non-relative categories. The wide diversity in traditional theology is sampled here, and the term should suggest nothing other than theology which is not process theology.

Traditional theology's many understandings of the doctrine of creation are scanned in Chapter 1. What is instantly obvious, is the wide and rich diversity of interpretations that have been put forward. Two concepts, however, consistently support the various understandings--creation ex nihilo and creatio per verbum. Three affirmations have also been made about creation. The first concerns the creation's total dependency on God as its creator. The second states that even though God and the creation are not one, the creation is fundamentally good. Finally, creation must be seen as an act of God's love.

Chapter 2 lays out the process concept of creation beginning with the basic understanding of creative-synthesis. Notable here is Hartshorne's and John Cobb's departure from Whitehead in placing supreme importance on the role God performs in the creative process, that is providing each entity with its initial aim. Through further analysis, God is seen as being "creativity itself" and his creativity is the

creativity which creates the creativity of others. God's creativity is then identified with the traditional concept of the Logos.

In the third chapter traditional doctrines and the process concept are juxtaposed. Process thought embraces creatio pro verbum but rejects creatio ex nihilo replacing it with the notion of creation out of chaos. In spite of this, process thought is able to make the same affirmations as traditional thought; however, the content of these affirmations is often distinctly different.

The dissertation concludes with a chapter on analogy. Various Thomist classifications are put forward and the deep disagreement among Thomists as to the correct understanding of them, is discussed. Reformed concepts of analogy are also cited, particularly Barth's ideas. Hartshorne's concept and use of analogy is set out and described as "the analogy of creativity." This analogy is then compared with Thomas' analogia entis and Barth's analogia fidei.

The bibliography at the end of the dissertation contains those sources actually used in the paper.

This author gratefully acknowledges that a large number of people have aided and abetted this project, in direct and indirect ways. Special thanks go to my advisors, Dr. John McIntyre and Mr. D.W.D. Shaw, for their patient guidance and assistance. Also, Charlene Ireland's arduous and excellent efforts in typing the final copy merit special mention as does my wife, Alegria's proofreading. I also appreciate that my children, Lois and Clay, were willing to accept that for awhile Charles Hartshorne seemed as important to their daddy as they did.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Chapter | Page |
|---|------|
| 1. THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION IN TRADITIONAL THOUGHT | 1 |
| CREATIO EX NIHILO AND CREATIO PER VERBUM | 2 |
| <u>Creatio ex Nihilo</u> | 3 |
| Ancient dualisms | 4 |
| Platonic dualism | 5 |
| Gnostic dualism | 9 |
| Irenaeus' statement of <u>creatio ex nihilo</u> | 10 |
| Problems with the concept of <u>creatio ex nihilo</u> | 11 |
| <u>Creatio per Verbum</u> | 15 |
| Creation by word | 15 |
| Creation by the Word | 17 |
| The Logos in Christian thought | 18 |
| AFFIRMATIONS OF THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION | 25 |
| God is the Source of All Existence, and Creation is Totally Dependent on Him | 25 |
| <u>Creatio ex nihilo</u> as a "qualified model" | 27 |
| Definition of divine creativity | 28 |
| The gift of being and Being Itself | 30 |
| The gift of being and scientific questioning | 33 |
| The dependence of the world on God | 34 |
| Augustine's idea of all creation being a single act | 35 |
| Thomas' view that God is continually creating. | 36 |
| Providence | 38 |
| General providence | 42 |
| Specific providence | 44 |
| Summary. | 46 |
| The Creation is Distinct from God and even though Corrupted by Sin is Fundamentally Good | 46 |
| Pantheism | 47 |
| Ontological discontinuity of Creator and creation | 50 |
| The goodness of creation | 51 |
| The problem of evil. | 54 |
| Definition of evil | 56 |
| Sin and evil: The Augustinian viewpoint | 62 |
| Sin and evil: The Irenaean viewpoint. | 66 |

| Chapter | Page |
|---|------|
| Creation is a Free Act of God's Gracious Love | 70 |
| God wills to create | 73 |
| ADDITIONAL ISSUES | 78 |
| The Participation of Creatures in the Creative | |
| Act | 78 |
| Creation and Time | 84 |
| CONCLUSIONS | 86 |
| 2. THE PROCESS CONCEPT OF CREATION | 89 |
| PROCESS AND CREATIVITY | 89 |
| ACTUAL ENTITIES | 93 |
| CREATIVE SYNTHESIS | 96 |
| THE SUBJECT | 98 |
| The Reformed Subjectivist Principle | 98 |
| Self-creation | 99 |
| THE DATA | 100 |
| Casual Efficacy | 102 |
| Perishing and Immortality | 104 |
| THE TWO ASPECTS OF SYNTHESIS | 106 |
| The Concrete Aspect of Synthesis | 106 |
| The Conceptual Aspect of Synthesis | 108 |
| DIPOLARITY | 113 |
| SUBJECTIVE FORM | 116 |
| Feelings | 116 |
| Subjective Aim | 119 |
| Initial Aim | 121 |
| Subjective Aim and Final Cause | 122 |
| Satisfaction | 124 |
| Superjective Nature | 125 |
| Freedom and Limitation | 127 |
| SOCIAL PROCESS | 130 |
| Creative Synthesis as Social Process | 131 |
| Classes of Social Relationships | 132 |

| Chapter | Page |
|--|------|
| Defining characteristic | 132 |
| Enduring objects | 133 |
| Corpuscular societies | 134 |
| Living societies | 135 |
| Routine and Innovation | 137 |
| Living persons | 138 |
| Hybrid prehensions | 140 |
| The soul-body relationship | 142 |
| The Human Soul | 143 |
| GOD | 146 |
| God as Cosmic Orderer | 147 |
| The Dipolar Nature of God | 149 |
| The Primordial Nature of God | 150 |
| Specific functions of the primordial nature | 153 |
| God's giving of the initial aim through his primordial nature | 156 |
| The Consequent Nature of God | 157 |
| Functions of the consequent nature | 160 |
| Good and evil in God's consequent nature | 162 |
| God's Subjective Aim | 165 |
| God as the Cosmic Mind and the Cosmos as God's Body | 168 |
| The mind-body relationship | 169 |
| The continuing endurance of the cosmic body | 172 |
| Persuasion | 174 |
| God as a Living Person | 179 |
| God and Creativity | 182 |
| Whitehead's concept of creativity | 183 |
| Hartshorne and Cobb's revision of Whitehead's concept | 187 |
| The initial aim and the superjective nature of God | 189 |
| God as Creativity Itself | 191 |
| God as Creativity Which Creates Other Creativity | 194 |
| The Logos as expressive being and creativity | 196 |
| Cobb's understanding of the Logos | 199 |
| The reason for the creative process | 205 |
| The Process Concept of God the Creator | 206 |
| 3. THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION AND THE PROCESS CONCEPT OF CREATION | 210 |
| PROCESS THEOLOGY, CREATIO EX NIHILO AND CREATIO PER VERBUM | 211 |
| Process Theology and <u>Creatio ex nihilo</u> | 211 |
| The intelligibility of creatio ex nihilo | 212 |

| | |
|---|---------|
| The preferability of comparing God's creative act with that of other creatures to creatio ex nihilo | 215 |
| Creation as response to stimuli | 216 |
| God's creation of the world out of his synthesis of the world not out of nothing | 217 |
| Process thought and ancient dualisms | 221 |
| Process thought and a first moment of creation | 225 |
| Creation out of chaos not out of nothing | 226 |
| Process Theology and <u>Creatio per Verbum</u> | 230 |
| PROCESS THEOLOGY AND THE AFFIRMATIONS OF THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION | 234 |
| God is the Source of All Existence and the Creation is Totally Dependent on him | 235 |
| Creation as transformation | 237 |
| Existence--essential or existential? | 238 |
| The dependency of the creation on God | 241 |
| The process understanding of providence | 243 |
| Process theology and Calvinism | 247 |
| General providence | 251 |
| Specific providence | 256 |
| Summary | 261 |
| The Creation is Distinct from God and even though Corrupted by Sin, is Fundamentally Good | 262 |
| Panentheism | 263 |
| The goodness of creation | 268 |
| The problem of evil | 274 |
| God as the "fellow-sufferer who understands" | 283 |
| Summary | 287 |
| Creation is the Free Act of God's Gracious Love | 289 |
| God's creating as a free act | 290 |
| God's creating as an act of love | 295 |
| Conclusions | 298 |
| 4. ANALOGY IN TRADITIONAL THEOLOGY AND PROCESS THOUGHT | 303 |
| ANALOGY IN TRADITIONAL THEOLOGY | 304 |
| Univocity, Equivocity, and Analogy | 305 |
| Thomas' Concepts of Analogy | 307 |
| Analogy <u>duorum ad tertium</u> | 307 |
| Analogy <u>unius ad alternum</u> | 308 |
| Analogies of attribution and proportionality | 309 |
| The <u>analogia entis</u> | 315 |
| The creation of the <u>analogia entis</u> | 317 |
| The 'way of eminence' | 322 |
| The choice between intrinsic attribution and proportionality | 326 |

| Chapter | Page |
|--|------|
| Some conclusions about Thomistic analogy | 334 |
| Analogy in Protestant Thought | 335 |
| Luther's understanding of analogy | 336 |
| Calvin's understanding of analogy | 337 |
| Karl Barth and the <u>analogia fidei</u> | 340 |
| Critique of the <u>analogia fidei</u> | 351 |
| Conclusions about Analogy in Traditional Theology | 355 |
| ANALOGY IN PROCESS THOUGHT | 357 |
| Whiteheadian Analogical Predication | 358 |
| Hartshorne's Understanding of Analogy | 362 |
| Hartshorne's classification of theological language | 363 |
| Hartshorne's use of analogy | 368 |
| The 'Analogy of Creativity' | 378 |
| The 'Analogy of Creativity' and the <u>Analogia Fidei</u> . . . | 383 |
| Conclusions | 385 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 387 |

Chapter 1

THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION IN TRADITIONAL THOUGHT

Richard Overman, in his study of evolution and the Christian doctrine of creation, makes the important observation that any religious doctrine is like an animal species, for it is the product of evolution.¹ Doctrines do not enter the world fully grown, and once they have arrived, they do not remain unchanged. They are profoundly influenced by history and survive as they continually adapt themselves to their changing environment. Even though doctrines are attempts to state objective truth, this truth has always arisen from human experience and has been profoundly influenced by it.

This general observation is confirmed by the doctrine of creation. It has undergone revision with every new statement of it. Any discussion of traditional interpretations of the doctrine must begin with the acknowledgment that there are as many traditions as interpretations. While Christians have, from an early date, explicitly confessed their faith in God the Creator, they have not agreed on what that confession meant. There has been unity of confession and diversity of interpretation. Contemporary expressions of the doctrine would be quite

¹Richard Overman, Evolution and the Christian Doctrine of Creation (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), p. 230.

unintelligible to the church Fathers, as indeed are their expressions to many theologians today. In this first chapter we shall look at some of the ideas traditional thinkers, both of the past and present, have had concerning the Christian doctrine of creation, noting both the agreement and disagreement in their views.

CREATIO EX NIHILO AND

CREATIO PER VERBUM

That the doctrine of creation has constantly undergone doctrinal development does not suggest futility in locating and discussing some concepts which have served as the foundations on which the various contractors have built. Beneath the various expressions of the doctrine two notions are almost always found: Creatio ex nihilo; and creatio per verbum. These appear to be the enduring ideas which theologians have continually considered essential to express their own understandings.

We could do as some theologians do and regard these two notions as being essentially the same thing² or look upon creatio per verbum as the method by which creatio ex nihilo is accomplished.³ What is implied in such an approach is viewing the two ideas as a negative and a positive expression of the one central affirmation that creation has no other

²e.g. Emil Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption, Dogmatics Vol. II (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), pp. 10ff.

³e.g. Alan Richardson, The Gospel According to Saint John, Torch Bible Commentaries (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 38. Luther lecturing on Genesis 1-5, says that the Word was God's instrument for sharing his work.

source than the divine will of God. This approach has considerable merit and could, in final synthesis, be proved correct. But while it is true that the two concepts are complimentary and correlative, they should first be considered separately, since they are of different origin and have not always been so closely connected.

Creatio ex Nihilo

No other expression of the doctrine of creation has assumed as much importance as creatio ex nihilo. It has been central to the thought of orthodox theologians from Irenaeus in the second century to Barth in the twentieth. Another contemporary who's ^{sc}orthodoxy is problematical, Paul Tillich, has said that the first task of theology is the interpretation of these words, for they are, "the marks of distinction between paganism even in its most refined form and Christianity even in its most primitive form."⁴

While some might argue about Tillich's priorities, he is certainly correct in citing the fact that the notion of creation out of nothing has been the church's most fundamental way of separating its teaching about God from that of other religions. Langdon Gilkey has suggested, with considerable insight, that it has usually taken a heretic to create a theologian.⁵ This is true in the case of creatio ex nihilo. Though it has a pre-Christian history, its classical

⁴Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. I (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 254.

⁵Langdon Gilkey, Maker of Heaven and Earth, Anchor Books edition (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1965), p.

formulation came as refutation to the various views of creation, which both surrounded and infiltrated the church as it spread its gospel into a Hellenized world. Gustaf Wingren points out that the early church's belief in God the Creator was part of their Old Testament heritage and, therefore, initially did not need re-affirmation. Hence, there is scant reference to it in most of the New Testament. It was during the second century, when groups like the Gnostics tried to disassociate the created world from God, that understanding of God as the creator of heaven and earth became essential to a proclamation of the Christian gospel.⁶ The Hellenistic notion, which the church at that time needed to refute, was that of dualism.

Ancient dualisms. Dualistic concepts of creation pervaded all ancient cosmologies. They may well have been the original creation stories. Though they appeared in a variety of forms, common to all of them was the existence of two separate realms of reality, such as light and darkness. Many of these stories saw creation taking place as some warrior-god subdued, by his superior prowess, the personified forces of evil.⁷ The Chaos-Dragon Myth, which may have been the literary ancestor of the Genesis creation stories, is one example of such a story. Some commentators think that the accounts of creation in Genesis were

⁶Gustaf Wingren, Creation and Law (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961), p. 4f.

⁷An excellent and extensive discussion of these stories is found in Bernhard W. Anderson, Creation Versus Chaos (New York: Association Press, 1967).

rendered the way they are specifically to refute dualistic cosmologies. John Davis, for example, says that the Priestly writer took the Babylonian creation stories which he encountered and used them as the framework for his own account (Genesis 1:1-2:4a). The radical difference being that in place of the picture of the God Marduk defeating Chaos and dividing her into the various firmaments, there is but the one creator God in the Priestly narrative.⁸

Platonic dualism. As far as Christian thought is concerned, the most influential dualism is extra-biblical coming from the cosmology of Plato's Timaeus. The Timaeus was the most influential of all Plato's writing in Hellenistic times. Not only was it the dominant world view of the first centuries A.D., but, since it was preserved through the Dark Ages, it supplied the early Middle Ages with their basic picture of the world and nature.⁹

Two Platonic assumptions lie behind Timaeus' account of creation: (1) the distinction between the two basic kinds of reality, Being and Becoming; and (2) the insistence that everything must have a cause.¹⁰

As concerns the distinction between Being and Becoming, Becoming is the reality which the senses can perceive. It is an inferior mode of

⁸ John D. Davis, Beginning Now, (London: Collins, 1971), p. 18.

⁹ A detailed discussion of this point is found in A. E. Taylor, Plato, the Man and His Work (London: Methuen and Company, 1926), p. 436.

¹⁰ For this distinction and the following discussion, I am indebted to Richard A. Norris, Jr., God and World in Early Christian Theology (New York: The Seabury Press, 1965), pp. 16-21.

existence characterized by being physical, occupying both time and space. It is also characterized by change. Things are always becoming something different from what they are now and never arrive at their perfected Being. Therefore, nothing stable or reliable can be found in the realm of Becoming. One cannot look there for a genuine knowledge of the reality of things.

The things of the world of Becoming are shadows of the world of Being. Being is the intelligible world, the realm of Ideas or Forms. Plato was fascinated with the mathematics of his day. Here, basic principles which were eternal and unchanging are illustrated in the visible world. It is the mind and the mind alone which, through intuition, can understand them completely. What is true of mathematics, Plato believes, is true of the rest of reality as well. The "really real" things are the Ideas or Forms which lie beyond the confines of existence. Man must use his reason to penetrate behind the reality which he sees (Becoming) to the greater reality beyond (Being).

Along with this distinction between Being and Becoming, Plato also postulated his doctrine of the Soul. The Soul to Plato is a cosmic force which is the source of all orderly movement in the cosmos. It is both "ingenerate and immortal," having never been created and being immune from death. The Soul occupies an intermediate place between Being and Becoming. It operates in the visible world as the life force supplying things with their essential movement. But it is also a partial member of the intelligible world, because it seeks to know eternal Truth and to rationalize its movements in accordance with the

eternal harmonies of the realm of Ideas. This is how order comes to the world of becoming.

The creation story, as Plato's Timaeus tells it, is that of God, being generous and not wanting to monopolize the goodness which he alone possesses, deciding to share his goodness by creating something in his image which would also be good. So Timaeus says:

. . . he took in hand all that was visible--he found it not at rest, but in discordant and disorderly motion, and brought it from disorder to order, since he judged this way better than that. Now he that is best might not and may not effect anything but that which is most beautiful. . . . he so made the universe to the end that the work of his fashioning might be in its kind most beautiful and best.¹¹

The image here is obviously that of the Athenian artist. The creation is a work of art, perhaps vastly superior, but certainly comparable to Greek architecture. Like a craftsman, the demiurge has not only materials out of which to work but plans. His creation cannot, however, be an exact replica of the perfection of the world of Being, because he must work with alien matter, which is not completely yielding to him. Therefore, imperfection exists in what he does.

The Demiurge creates the cosmos as a single organism with a soul and understanding, but his creating stops at the point of creating living creatures. This he does not do himself. So that there may be mortality as well as immortality, he delegates the job of creating people and beasts to the lesser gods which he has created. They are to copy him

¹¹Plato, Timaeus, 30. a and b. All quotations are from A. E. Taylor's translation, Plato: Timaeus and Critias (London: Methuen and Co., 1929).

in their creating, using the materials he provides. He gives them this charge:

I will sow the seed and make the beginning; thereafter do ye fashion living creatures, weaving mortality upon immortality. Bring them to birth; give them their sustenance and growth, and when they fail, receive them again to yourselves.¹²

So the Demiurge mixes more of the materials out of which he has created the universe, and from these he creates human souls which he plants throughout the universe, entrusting each soul to its 'visible god' (a star). He leaves these gods with the task of creating, governing, and preserving mortal existence.

How seriously a reader is to take this story is controversial. The story is not told by Socrates himself, but by Timaeus, whose historical identity no one has been able to establish with any certainty. One is hard pressed to think that Plato wanted his readers to take it literally. It is most probably a myth. Nonetheless, it has become the classic account of 'creation-out-of-matter,' which is surely Plato's view of cosmology.

A Platonic view of creation was accepted by some within the early church. Justin for one takes the myth of the Timaeus literally and sees it as deriving from the creation story in Genesis. He tells the Emperor Antoninus that Christians "have been taught that God at the beginning, because he is good, did fashion all things out of unformed matter."¹³ It may be well to recall that Justin was a pagan philosopher

¹²Plato, Timaeus, op. cit. 41d.

¹³Justin Martyr, Apology I, 10.2, Cited by Norris, op. cit., p. 62.

before he became a Christian. Those who had been raised in the faith did not embrace Plato as warmly as he.¹⁴

Though others rejected this approach of reading Genesis through Plato's glasses,¹⁵ the most emphatic renunciation of creation-out-of-matter was made by Irenaeus, the "father of orthodoxy." His main work is entitled Against Heresies and is a refutation of what he considered to be a sectarian movement within the church--Gnosticism.

Gnostic Dualism. The origins of Gnosticism are quite uncertain. Irenaeus gives a history, but it is not now accepted as being accurate. He probably was right in insisting that the roots of Gnosticism were planted outside the Christian faith and that it was not just a version of Christian thought but a complete perversion of it. No precise definition of Gnosticism can be given, for it was not a unified movement. Raymond Brown does, however, point out that certain common patterns can be recognized. They include: ontological dualism; intermediary beings between God and man; the agency of these beings in the production of evil; a strictly material world; the soul as a divine spark imprisoned in the world; redemption coming through special, revealed knowledge; a limited

¹⁴Only Clement of Alexandria seems to have shared this Platonic perspective. Strom. v. 14. He, however, also states that creation was the product of God's will and that he simply willed the world into existence.

¹⁵For example Theophilus of Antioch argued that if matter were co-eternal with God, it would be on a par with him. Theophilus To Autolycus II. 4. cited by Richard H. Overman, Evolution and the Christian Doctrine of Creation (Philadelphia; The Westminster Press, 1968), p. 248.

number of people capable of receiving this knowledge; and a divine redeemer who frees man from the evil, material world.¹⁶

Gnostic thought seems to have accompanied the Christian church just about everywhere it went. Irenaeus distinguishes at least a dozen schools of gnostic thought, but his main concern is with the teaching of a Valentinian Gnostic, Ptolemy, whose thought flourished around Irenaeus' bishopric of Lyons.

It is not appropriate here to discuss Irenaeus' arguments against Ptolemy. Suffice it here to say that Irenaeus recognized in Ptolemy's thought a thoroughgoing dualism and was abhorred by it. There were in Ptolemy's teaching two worlds--the immortal realm inhabited by divine beings at whose apex stood the unknowable "Ultimate." Outside of this realm was the material world which had been generated out of a fallen spiritual being. Also generated from the material world was the stuff out of which the souls of men and of angels had been made. One of these angelic souls was the Demiurge who dominated and controlled the world. Ptolemy believed this Demiurge was the God of the Old Testament.¹⁷

Irenaeus' statement of creatio ex nihilo. Since we are the heirs of the orthodoxy Irenaeus fathered, it is fairly obvious to us that such an idea would be repugnant to him. To suggest that there was a God beyond the God of the Old Testament was completely contrary to the

¹⁶ Raymond E. Brown, The Gospel According to St. John, I-XII, The Anchor Bible, Vol. 29 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966), p. LIII.

¹⁷ See Norris, op. cit., pp. 76-78.

witness of scripture and the preaching of the Apostles. Nowhere was such a god imagined. Since Irenaeus believed that the only authority the church had was scripture and tradition, ideas which could not be found there simply had to be rejected. Irenaeus, therefore, insists that the Christian must believe in God the Creator "who made the heavens and the earth and all things therein." Furthermore,

There is nothing either above Him or after him; nor that influenced by anyone but of His own free will, He created all things, since He is the only God, the only Lord, the only Creator, the only Father, alone containing all things and Himself commanding all things into existence.¹⁸

Not only has God himself created all things, but he has needed nothing to do it. "For this is a peculiarity of the pre-eminence of God, not to stand in need of other instruments for the creation of those things which are summoned into existence."¹⁹

With Irenaeus the idea of creation out of nothing became firmly established in orthodox Christian thought. We shall be looking in greater detail at this concept as we go along, but it seems wise now to pause briefly to note a few of the problems that this idea raises.

Problems with the concept of creatio ex nihilo. One problem with the concept of creation out of nothing is that, in spite of Irenaeus' insistence on the authority of scripture for belief, creation out of nothing is not explicitly mentioned in the Bible. The closest scripture

¹⁸Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Bk. II. 1.1. All quotations from The Writings of Irenaeus, Vol. I, in the Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Vol. V (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1868).

¹⁹Ibid., II, 2.3.

comes to it are these words of the mother of the Maccabees: "I implore you my child, observe heaven and earth and all that is in them, and acknowledge that God made them out of what did not exist and that mankind came into being in the same way."²⁰ James Strahan feels that the Vulgate translated this far too definitely when it said "creation out of nothing."²¹ The same is true of the two other passages sometimes used to support this idea, Romans 4:17 and Hebrews 11:3. Both of these suggest creation out of that which did not exist rather than creation ex nihilo.

Bernhard Anderson believes that creation out of nothing is definitely not the teaching of Genesis 1. Creation out of chaos is what is being described. He says:

As suggested in the footnote of the RSV, it is grammatically possible to treat Genesis 1:1 as a temporal clause which introduces a main sentence which serves as a preface to the entire creation account. On this view, the story actually begins in verse 2 with a portrayal of uncreated chaos,²² as the presupposition and background of God's creative work.

Other authorities agree with Anderson that the Biblical teaching is more adequately conceptualized by creation out of chaos than creation out of nothing. Davis comments:

²⁰II Maccabees 7:28, trans. The Jerusalem Bible.

²¹James Strahan, "Creation," in James Hastings, ed., Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1911), p. 230.

²²Bernhard Anderson, "Creation," in George Buttrick ed., The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. A-D (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 728.

The most clear and certain teaching concerning creation is that is is the bringing of order out of chaos. God sorts out the various factors that compose chaos; he names them and distinguishes them The final goal of this is not a universe stuffed tight with lots of things made out of nothing, but a complete harmony of being brought into reconciliation with each other.²³

There is far from unanimous agreement with Davis and Anderson on this point. D. M. MacKinnon, for example, insists that we should interpret the language of Genesis as asserting creatio ex nihilo.²⁴

This notion of creation out of chaos never received attention, much less acceptance, in the teaching of the church Fathers. Perhaps this is because the affirmation of anything, even chaos, which might be co-eternal with God, could have been seen as placing a limitation on his sovereignty. Tertullian, for example, realized that creatio ex nihilo was not a Biblical notion, but he argued for its validity from silence. Had God, he reasoned, made things out of matter, then scripture would have been obligated to say so, but there is no necessity that it mention his creating out of nothing for this idea is completely intelligible. The idea of an omnipotent God creating out of matter, unformed or not, would require an explanation of where this matter came from. If anything is co-eternal with God, then God is neither totally free nor sovereign.²⁵

²³ Davis, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

²⁴ Antony Flew and D. M. MacKinnon, "Creation" in New Essays in Philosophical Theology, eds., Antony Flew and Alisdair MacIntyre, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1955), p. 170. This is also Dr. Gilkey's view. Gilkey, op. cit., p. 47.

²⁵ Tertullian, Against Hermogenes, 21.3 in The Writings of Tertullian, The Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Vol. 15 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1920).

What has been established here is that the idea of creatio ex nihilo is not an idea clearly taught by scripture, but rather one that was formulated to defend the Christian concept of God's sovereign creative action from non-Christian ones. According to Ronald Hepburn:

It was clearly developed in and through a sustained polemic with its rivals, both earlier and contemporary. Against the Platonic account of a Demiurge shaping a pre-existent matter after the pattern of the Forms, Christianity affirmed that God created out of nothing whatever.²⁶

Although its negations were quite clear, its affirmations as to what precisely was involved in God's creative act are not. John Macquarrie points out that the distinction between creation out of nothing and creation out of a pre-existent formless matter is not at all clear. For if the matter was, as Plato contended, without any determinate characteristics, it would be indistinguishable from nothing.²⁷

This brings us to a second important problem with the idea of creatio ex nihilo: Just how intelligible is it? Can any precise meaning be attached to these words? All creation that we know anything about is creation out of something. Even the creation of the world as we know it today is creation out of the world as it existed yesterday. How can one talk about God's creating out of nothing and make sense when this is contrary to any notion of creation he can attain elsewhere.

²⁶ Ronald W. Hepburn, "Religious Doctrine of Creation" in Paul Edwards, ed. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol. 2 (New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1967), p. 253.

²⁷ John Macquarrie, Principles of Christian Theology (London: SCM Press, 1966), p. 198.

A "solution" to this problem was found in the classical doctrine of analogy which is discussed in the last chapter of this thesis. Suffice it to say here that because the doctrine is not precise, it has been explained and interpreted in a wide variety of ways. The phrase means quite different things to different thinkers. As we shall note presently, modern defenses of the doctrine are decidedly different from traditional ones.

Creatio per Verbum

The second fundamental concept of the doctrine of creation is creatio per verbum. Unlike creatio ex nihilo, it is firmly rooted in scripture. It appears at the beginning of Genesis (1:3) and at the beginning of St. John's witness to the gospel (1:1). Abundant additional use is made of it in both Testaments.²⁸ There is, however, a subtle but significant difference in its formulation between the two canons.

Creation by word. In the Old Testaments the idea is basically that of "creation by word." For the ancient Hebrews, speaking was the way in which one made his will known. God creates simply by speaking. "God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." (Genesis 1:3) As Alan Richardson points out, there is no hyposticizing of 'word.' God's act of speaking is his act of creation. "He spoke and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast." (Psalm 33:9)

²⁸ e.g. Isaiah 45:23, and 53:10-11; Psalm 147:15-18, and 107:20; Hebrews 4:12.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer states this quite clearly:

'Word' means 'spoken word'--not 'symbol,' 'meaning,' or 'idea,' but the concrete thing itself. That God in speaking creates means that the idea, the name and the work are one in the created reality in God. The essential point is, therefore, not that the Word has 'effects,' but that God's Word is itself work . . . with God the imperative²⁹ is the indicative. The latter does not follow from the former.

J. A. Hutchenson draws the distinction that with men deeds are both intended and done. They cannot be understood outside the categories of intention and decision. With God there is no such distinction.³⁰

Behind the idea of creation by word is the Hebrew idea of language as an activity. Words are dynamic instruments. This is as true of the speech of man as it is of God. The difference is that God's word is inherently efficacious. Man's word often fails. D. D. Evans points out that "a central theme in biblical theology is the conception of the divine words as an act, which brings about results."³¹ The words of men are often seen as having almost a magical power, even more so the words of God. When the prophets declaim, "Thus saith the Lord," they have no doubt that their prophecy will be fulfilled. It is not an idle threat or a vain promise, but a statement of fact. God's word is an expression of his will and contains within itself the power of accomplishing its intention. Such is the Old Testament concept of creatio per verbum--creation by the spoken word of God.

²⁹Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Creation and Fall (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 20.

³⁰J. A. Hutchenson, Faith, Reason and Existence (Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 102.

³¹D. D. Evans, The Logic of Self Involvement (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 163.

Creation by the word. Probably it was during the intertestamental period that "creation by word" became "creation by the Word." Alan Richardson says that in the literature of this time two creation motifs are found. God's creation is the result of his word (logos) and of his wisdom (sophia).³² Wisdom seems to be the more common expression and may have become personified before the Word. In Proverbs (8:22-31) 'Wisdom' is God's agent or architect of creation. This may be more poetic than literal, but later on in the Wisdom Literature wisdom is specifically designated as the 'artificer of all things.' Wisdom had taken on its own identity, even though not an identity independent of God. One could now speak of Wisdom without having to specify that it was in fact the Wisdom of God.

This idea of Wisdom being God's creative agent developed within rabbinic Judaism until in the First Century A.D. it was basically compatible with a non-biblical idea of creation--the Stoic doctrine of the Logos.

The Stoic doctrine of the Logos was a description of the universal reason that was immanent in and governing over the world. The Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, was greatly impressed by this concept, and he used it to reconcile--he thought--the teachings of Moses and Plato. The latter, he claimed, borrowed them from the former. Philo speculated that the Logos is an active, rational, teleological,

³² Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (London: SCM Press, 1958), pp. 155f.

impersonal principle which is directly responsible for the shaping of passive matter. For him, the Logos is an intermediary between God and the world. Through the Logos, God operates in his creation. In Philo it is quite clear that the Word has a status independent of God. The Word is God's agent. God does not create by speaking, but through the agency of his word.³³

The influence of Philo's teaching on Hellenistic Judaism appears to have been enormous. It dominated the philosophical world view of the era when the New Testament was taking form.

The Logos in Christian Thought. In the New Testament, the most explicit statement of creation by the Word is found in the Prologue to John's gospel:

In the beginning was the Word:
the Word was with God
And the Word was God.
He was with God in the beginning
Through him all things came to be,
not one thing had its being but through him.³⁴

Scholars have searched diligently for the correct background against which these words are to be interpreted. No one perspective seems to provide an adequate vantage point. Neither does a synthesis of them all explain them sufficiently. The Prologue must be seen, in final analysis, as John's own unique insight. None the less, it is still

³³Ibid.

³⁴John 1:1-3. The Jerusalem Bible.

worthwhile to look at the various things which could, and probably did, influence him.

In writing the Prologue, John is obviously well aware of what Hellenized Judaism taught concerning the Logos. Scholars debate whether or not he was personally familiar with Philo's teaching. William Temple says that John is simply using a term (i.e. Logos) that was in general use at the time he wrote, and is thereby seeking a common ground with his readers.³⁵ Brown sees both Philo and John being dependent on the Old Testament with their thoughts developing along parallel but independent lines. Had Philo never existed, John would probably not have thought differently than he did.³⁶ H. A. Wolfson does contend, however, that John purposely modeled his Prologue after the first verses in Genesis as interpreted by Philo.³⁷ If this is so, it must also be noted that John substantially modified Philo's teaching in so doing. Basically, John accepts the hyposticising of the Word, but he insists that the Word is to be identified with God. "The Word was God." It is not to be regarded as an intermediary but as God himself. The Word is the agency of creation, but the Word is God's own creative power. It is one with him. Irenaeus was later to stress the fact that John's teaching was

³⁵William Temple, Readings in St. John's Gospel (London: The Macmillian Co., 1959), p. 4.

³⁶Brown, op. cit., p. LVIII.

³⁷Harry Austryn Wolfson, The Philosophy of the Church Fathers, Vol. I (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 178.

that since the beginning, it is through the Word that God himself acts and reveals himself.³⁸

Wolfson says that John's description of the Logos is based not only on Philo's understanding of the pre-existent Logos, but also on the Wisdom Literature's understanding of the pre-existent Christ.³⁹ This last point is the revolutionary aspect of John's teaching. John sees in the various Logos-Sophia ideas surrounding him a seed of truth as to the identity of who Jesus Christ actually is, and he places his entire gospel within this framework. Jesus is the eternal Wisdom or Logos of God by whom the world was made. The amazing thing about this, is that this eternal Word has taken flesh in Jesus Christ and has "thus revealed the transcendent God in the only way in which men could have seen him, namely in human form."⁴⁰ This is what would have scandalized the Greeks. They admired the Logos and sought through it to leave the bondage of their flesh and gain union with God. But as Brown says, "The suggestion that the ultimate encounter with the Logos would be when the Logos became flesh, would have been unthinkable."⁴¹

John Knox says that the Prologue reflects a state of development in the thought of the early church. Jesus is no longer to be regarded

³⁸Irenaeus, op. cit., 111.21.1.

³⁹Wolfson, op. cit., p. 178.

⁴⁰Richardson, The Gospel According to St. John, op. cit., p. 37.

⁴¹Brown, op. cit., p. 31.

as simply just a man who, by virtue of what he did, was adopted by God as his Son or Messiah. The reality of Jesus is that he is the incarnation of the Logos itself.⁴²

To say that Jesus is the incarnation of the Word is to ascribe creation to him. He is the divine power which made the world. Evans says, "As the Word, he had been God's creative instrument or agent, so that when he was born as a human child, he entered a world which was his own property because it was his own creation."⁴³ Wolfson summarizes it this way:

When John in his Gospel adopted the Philonic term Logos as a description of the pre-existent Christ, he explicitly retained the Philonic description of the Logos and the Pauline description of the pre-existent Christ as an instrument of creation. His pre-existent Christ, now⁴⁴ surnamed Logos, is he through whom all things came into being.

Though John is the only New Testament writer to use the Logos concept, there are numerous other examples of creation being effected through the Son. For example, this statement from Colossians:

He is the image of the unseen God
and the first-born of all creation,
for in him were created
all things in heaven and on earth . . .
all things were created through him and for him.⁴⁵

⁴² John Knox, The Humanity and Divinity of Christ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).

⁴³ Evans, op. cit., p. 166.

⁴⁴ Wolfson, op. cit., p. 257.

⁴⁵ Colossians 1:15-16, The Jerusalem Bible; see also I Corinthians 8:6, Hebrews 1:2, and Revelation 3:14.

The conclusion that we must make, then, is the one made by the Fathers, that creation by the Word meant creation by Christ. This needs to be qualified only by mentioning that this is not the same as saying that the man Jesus of Nazareth was the creator of the world. It is the pre-existent Christ incarnate in Jesus, who is the creative Word.

Arian teaching would have accepted that the Logos created all things, it would have insisted that the Logos was itself a creature. The Logos did have prestige of having been made out of nothing, having been brought into existence by God alone while all other creatures are made out of matter. The Logos was, therefore, the mediator between God and the world.⁴⁶ This view was flatly rejected by the church.

We are here on the verge of entering a discussion of many problems which are outside the concern of this paper--the complexities of the Trinity and the nature of the Incarnation. How the Word became flesh John does not speculate, nor does Paul specify how the pre-existent Christ is also Jesus of Nazareth. These are mysteries that they do not probe and that we must leave alone. Brown says:

The description of the Word with God in heaven before creation is remarkably brief; there is not the slightest indication of interest in metaphysical speculation about relationships within God or what later theology would call Trinitarian⁴⁷ possession. . . . The Prologue does not speculate how the Word was.

One result of equating creatio per verbum and creation by Christ must be noted here, however. The Word which creates is also the Word

⁴⁶Jaroslav Pelikan, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 196.

⁴⁷Brown, op. cit., p. 23.

that redeems. All things are created by the Word and redeemed by that same word incarnate in Jesus. This is the way Irenaeus sees John's doctrine of the Logos:

The disciple of the Lord therefore desiring . . . to establish the rule of truth in the church that there is one Almighty God who made all things by His Word, visible and invisible and in whom God made the creation, He also bestowed salvation on the men included in the creation; thus commenced His teaching in the gospel, 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God.'⁴⁸

The Arian controversy forced the church at the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) to state unequivocally the unity of the Son and the Logos. "We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ . . . through whom (namely the Son) all things came into being, things in heaven and things on earth, who for the sake of us men and the purpose of our salvation came down and became incarnate. . . ."⁴⁹ Pelikan says that this confession is a cosmological confession and a soteriological confession simultaneously. Underlying it is the conviction that the one who creates the universe is the one who saves it.⁵⁰

The Logos doctrine became for the early church a way of demonstrating the unity of God the Father and God the Son and of denying any "two god" ideas such as those held by Marcion. Through it they could show that there was not a "bad god" of the Old Testament and a "good God" of the New Testament or a creator god and a separate redeemer god.

⁴⁸Irenaeus, III, 2. See also IV, 36, where he speaks of the Word washing away the filth of the daughters of Zion.

⁴⁹Pelikan, op. cit., p. 201.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 203.

Through his Logos, God is both Creator and Redeemer. Even though the Logos has become personalized, it is still as intimately part of God as though it were still nothing more than his spoken word.

By way of concluding this discussion of creatio per verbum, we should emphasize that the Fathers saw no fundamental disjunction between creation by word and creation by the Word. The latter was simply a development of the former. For example, Tertullian speaks of the Word having first existed with God as his reason, then taking on its own form when it was uttered in the act of creation and finally being made incarnate in Jesus Christ.⁵¹ In the Fathers creation by word and creation by the Word are the same phenomenon differently described.

Since the Logos concept provides a way of understanding God as diversity within unity, we can readily see why the two concepts, creatio ex nihilo and creatio per verbum are essentially compatible and mutually supportive. Irenaeus can speak quite easily of God needing nothing in his act of creation for "his own Word is both suitable and sufficient for the formation of all things."⁵² From here on out, when speaking of the doctrine of creation, we will have both these ideas in mind unless we indicate otherwise.

⁵¹Tertullian, Against Praxes, Ch. XI and XII. All quotations from The Writings of Tertullian, Vol. II, in the Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Vol. XV (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870).

⁵²Irenaeus, op. cit., II, 5.

AFFIRMATIONS OF THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION

In discussing the origins and the basic formulations of the two ideas of the doctrine of creation, we noticed that both concepts denied or radically modified other ideas of creation which flourished alongside them. Creatio ex nihilo was explicitly negative in character; creatio per verbum implicitly so. This does not mean that they do not say something positive. What we must do now is see what these affirmations are. Many lists could be formulated and used, but the one following seems both straightforward and adequate:

1. God is the source of all existence, and the creation is totally dependent on Him.
2. Creation is distinct from God, and even though corrupted by sin, is basically good.
3. Creation is a free act of God's gracious love.

We shall look at these in turn.

God is the Source of All Existence, and Creation is Totally Dependent on Him.

The first clause of this heading is carefully worded. From the preceding discussion we could easily have said, "God is the creator of everything, . . ." This would be misleading. For most people, to speak of God creating implies his involvement with a process with which we are familiar--making something out of something else with the assistance of tools. The image of the artist or the craftsman comes to mind. But images like these are precisely the ones the doctrine of creation would set aside. The doctrine of creation is not intended as a discussion of

how the world was made. The men who formulated its classical expressions were not postulating cosmogonies, nor were they trying to describe God's creative process. "God creates out of nothing by His Word," is not a statement similar to, "Man creates out of matter with his tools." The latter expresses a dependency on some assistance; the former denies it. Therefore, we have two different ideas of creation in the two statements. With man there must be materials out of which he creates and either ideas to inspire him or plans to direct him. God needs none of these. His creative act does not rely on anything outside Himself. No image of human creativity can capture this.

If all images of human creativity must be set aside in speaking of God's creativity, is it possible at all to speak of divine creativity? Is it nonsense to speak of God creating out of nothing by His Word? Many Theologians find this too harsh, or they see speaking of creation in this way as an attempt to push us toward an understanding that is beyond our normal comprehension. Irenaeus says that God creates in "a fashion which we can neither describe nor conceive."⁵³ Bruner says creatio ex nihilo (which he equates with creatio per verbum) presupposes an absolute discontinuity in human thought.⁵⁴ By using the concept discussed above, theologians are trying to point at something which transcends human experience--something which is a mystery. Ian Ramsay's discussion of this is quite helpful.⁵⁵

⁵³Ibid., II. 2.4.

⁵⁴Bruner, op. cit., p. 11.

⁵⁵Ian Ramsey, Religious Language (London: SCM Press, 1957), pp. 71ff.

Creatio ex nihilo as a "qualified model." Ramsey focuses his attention on creatio ex nihilo. He says we have here an example of a "qualified model." The purpose of the qualified model is to create a discernment situation in which one suddenly grasps a truth which, because of its incomprehensibility, would otherwise elude him. In all qualified models, one of the terms is "at home." The other is "playing away." In creatio ex nihilo, creation is a down-to-earth word with a straightforward relationship to an ordinary situation. As has already been said, creation refers to something that is made or fashioned. The creator is dependent on pre-existing materials. Now add to this model creation, the qualifier, ex nihilo, and we are directed to a very uncommon situation--a type of creation that cannot be contained within the usual categories. Therefore, a qualified model is not something to be empirically tested, but rather something which causes discernment to arise. In the case of creatio ex nihilo, the desired discernment is one's status as a creature as opposed to God's status as a creator.

The problem here, Ramsey points out, is that many theologians don't acknowledge this and speak as though creatio ex nihilo were similar to creation out of matter. Gilkey broadens this criticism. Most people, he claims, think that the human idea of manufacturing is what is meant by divine creation. God is regarded as a great carpenter or engineer making the universe out of a something called chaos.⁵⁶ Creation out of nothing does not mean that there was once a nothing which God used as something in His creating. That God used nothing is what distinguishes

⁵⁶Gilkey, op. cit., p. 47.

His creating from man's. This is why we must be cautious when we affirm with the Creed our belief in God "the maker of heaven and earth."

Definition of divine creativity. Not being allowed to think of God's creative act as being similar to man's, we cannot avoid the conclusion that what God does when He creates is radically different than what men do. The question, then, confronts us, "What is divine creation?" Thomas Aquinas gives this answer: "To create is, properly speaking, to cause or produce the being of things."⁵⁷

This definition is phrased differently by different thinkers, but it is essentially the same idea. For example, Gilkey calls God's creative act "the divine evocation into existence."⁵⁸ Irenaeus says, "He himself called into being the substance of His creation when it previously had no existence."⁵⁹ Karl Barth looks upon divine creation as "grace." "We exist," he says, "and heaven and earth exist in their complete, supposed infinity because God gives them existence."⁶⁰

This gift of existence is a unique creative act proper to God and His alone. Creatures cannot bestow existence. Human creativity is simply a process of transforming what already exists. Divine creativity is the donation of existence itself. Athanasius was one of the first to make this distinction plain:

⁵⁷ Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Pt. I, Q. 45, A. 6. All quotations taken from The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas (London: R. & T. Washbourne, 1912).

⁵⁸ Gilkey, op. cit., p. 52.

⁵⁹ Irenaeus, op. cit., II, 10.4; also III, 8.3.

⁶⁰ Karl Barth, Dogmatics in Outline (London: SCM Press, 1966), p. 54.

For God creates, and to create is also ascribed to men. . . . Yet does God create as men do? . . . Perish the thought, we understand the term in one sense of God and in another of men. For God creates in that he calls what is not into being, needing nothing thereunto, but men work with some existing material.⁶¹

Of the contemporaries few would disagree with Tillich's statement of the distinction:

Man creates new synthesis out of given material. This creation is really transformation. God creates the material out of which the new synthesis can be developed. God creates man, he gives man the power of transforming himself and his world. Man can transform only what is given to him. God is primarily and essentially creative; man is secondarily and existentially creative.⁶²

Thomas is also quite clear on this point. First, he equates "not-being" with "nothing" and then says God brings things into being from nothing. The being which God produces is absolute being, not any one particular being. Both God and man "create," but God creates absolute being. All man can do is produce being which has already been created in this or that creature.⁶³ What Thomas seems to be saying is that God is responsible for being in general. Man is responsible for the particular manifestations of being. Thomas, unfortunately, uses emanistic language in describing God's creative act:

We have to think not only of the emanation of some particular being from some other particular being, but also the emanation of the whole of being from a universal cause, which is God, and it is this emanation we call by the name of creation.⁶⁴

⁶¹Athanasius, De Decretis, Chapter 3, Section 11, Cited by Gilkey, op. cit., p. 53.

⁶²Tillich, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 256.

⁶³Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, op. cit., Pt. I, Q. 45, Art. 5.

⁶⁴Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, op. cit., Pt. I, Q. 85, Art. 1.

The gift of being and Being Itself. To give being to the creation is the appropriate creative act for God. It most totally befits his nature to do this because He is "Being Itself." This is the fundamental understanding we must have of God's nature. Augustine grasped this firmly. Repeatedly, he meditates on the meaning of the divine name as spoken to Moses from the burning bush, "I am Who am." In his commentary on John's Gospel, he expresses this insight: "He did not say: I am God or I am the Author of the world, or I am the Creator of all things, or I am the guardian of this people who must be liberated. Rather, he said only this: I am Who am."⁶⁵ What Augustine realized was that God must not be identified with any mode of being but with being itself.

Though theologians are virtually unanimous in describing God's creative act as the bestowing of being, as we noted in the examples earlier on, they have not agreed as to what precisely this means. They give no single answer to the question, "What is being?" A brief comparison of two highly influential views, those of Augustine and Aquinas will illustrate this well.

Josef Pieper points out that the contrast between the two views is between Augustine's "essentialistic" approach and Aquinas' "existentialistic" approach.⁶⁶ Augustine contends that no matter what natural or physical causes may be used in the production of things, their

⁶⁵ Augustine, Commentary on St. John's Gospel, 28, 8, 8-10, quoted by Josef Pieper, Introduction to Thomas Aquinas (London: Farber and Farber, 1962), p. 139.

⁶⁶ Pieper, op. cit., p. 139. I owe much of this discussion to Pieper's analysis.

natures "are the production of none but the high God. It is his occult power which prevades all things and is present in all, . . . which gives being to all that is and modifies and limits its existence, so that without him it would not be thus or thus, nor would have any being at all."⁶⁷

Augustine is thinking in terms of Platonic archetypes--of pure essences remote from actualization. Truly to be means always to be in the same way. In his work on the Trinity he says, "Perhaps it should be said that God alone is essentia. For he alone truly is because he is immutable."⁶⁸ Being is most authentic in its immutable essence. It is each creature's immutable essence which God gives to it in his creative act.

Thomas's viewpoint is radically different. What made something really real was not its essence but its "act-of-being." The decisive thing about being is simply that it is not what it is. What is crucial is the basic act-of-being itself. The distinction of non-existence from existence is more basic than, say, that of plant from animal. Essence is secondary to existence.

According to Pieper, the distinction between the views comes from the two thinkers' understanding of God himself. Augustine in hearing the divine name thinks it means, "I am He Who never changes." Thomas hearing it would think, "I am the pure act of being." As concerns

⁶⁷Augustine, The City of God, Bk. XVII, Chapter 25.

⁶⁸Augustine, The Trinity, 7, 5, 10., quoted by Pieper, op. cit., p. 139.

this supreme being's creative act--the bringing of other things into being--Augustine would regard it as the One Who Is making all things what they are. Thomas would insist that for something to be brought into existence is for it to receive sheer existence, not any particular type of existence. "The first fruit of God's activity is existence itself; all other effects presuppose it."⁶⁹

One other notion of Thomas should be pointed out. He sees existence as actuality and God as actus purus. Existence is something that the creation does. Existence is not the particular properties a creature has (hair, voice, personality, etc.), and it is not the individual acts the creature may perform (talking, growing, thinking). Beyond and behind these it does something more fundamental: It exists! This is the one thing common to all of creation, and the thing which God and he alone gives.

We should note here that neither Augustine nor Thomas saw any other factor at work in God's gift of being other than God. According to Augustine:

. . . it is not lawful to hold any creature be it ever so small to have any other Creator than God. . . . The Angels . . . though at His command work in things of the world, yet we no more call them creators of livings things than we call husbandmen the creators of fruits and trees.⁷⁰

⁶⁹Thomas Aquinas, Compendium of Theology, I, 68, 119., quoted by Pieper, op. cit., p. 141.

⁷⁰Augustine, The City of God, 12. 24.

Thomas saw a bit more scope for man's participation in creation, but this certainly in no way qualifies his insistence on God's being the source of all existence. Gilson contrasts Augustine's and Thomas' views in this way:

In Augustinianism, the activity of the creature does not draw out of the passive potency of matter as secondary causes do in Thomistic Aristotelianism; it simply brings to light the effects implanted by God in the seminal reasons at the moment of creation.⁷¹

Though neither side would probably admit it, both did see the temporal process by which the world exists as one of shared creativity. God doesn't accomplish all of creation entirely on his own.

The gift of being and scientific questioning. Many theologians feel that since God's creative act is the bestowing of being, there are certain questions about creation that are inappropriately asked of religion. These are primarily scientific questions. There is no scientific way to investigate God's creative act, since it totally transcends the natural process which science explores. The doctrine of creation should never be seen as an answer to such queries as, "How did the world begin?" It cannot answer this or any other question concerning the origins of the universe. The doctrine would not, however, deny that these are important questions and must be asked, but they have at best a "very remote and indirect relationship to the Christian doctrine of creation."⁷² How God creates is quite beyond the creature's experience

⁷¹Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine, op. cit., p. 208.

⁷²Bruner, op. cit., p. 8.

and is not a possible item of his knowledge because it belongs to a sphere which totally transcends what the creature can know. The bestowing of being is the ultimate mystery of existence that no amount of knowledge about the natural order can explain. Since they deal with entirely different spheres of reference, science and religion cannot possibly conflict in spite of what philosophical positivists and religious fundamentalists would contend. Antony Flew and D. M. MacKinnon, from their respective positions as atheist and Christian, are agreed that the religious understanding of the doctrine of creation is as an article of faith and not of scientific cosmology. For theology, questions of science are irrelevant. "Creation cannot be comprehended; it can only be apprehended by faith."⁷³

The dependence of the world on God. To see God's creative act as the bestowing of being on all that exists is, as we have seen, a greatly different creative act from what the creature does in his creation. To complete this disjunction, we must understand that divine creation is not an event. Rather, it is a way of expressing a relationship between the Creator and his creatures. Concerning the notion of creatio ex nihilo, Tillich says that it "is not the title of a story. It is the classical formula which expresses the relationship between God and the world."⁷⁴ This relationship is one of absolute dependence of the world on God.

⁷³Antony Flew and D. M. MacKinnon, op. cit., p. 178.

⁷⁴Tillich, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 254.

Since God alone is responsible for existence, we are perhaps stating the obvious by saying that the world is totally dependent on him. Without God's gift of being, creation would not be. Were this gift recinded, the creation would return to nothingness. There is no being without God's creative act; therefore, the creation depends utterly on him.

Theologians have insisted that this dependence is total. Not only did the things of the past exist because God gave them being, but also the things of the present exist because they receive life from him. They too depend on God for the fact that they are. Two very different ways of understanding of this dependence have been put forward: (1) God created everything in one single act; and (2) God is continually creative.

Augustine's idea of all creation being a single act. The Fathers did not doubt that God was immanent in the world, but there is no evidence that this was an aspect of creation. Augustine is a case in point. Augustine contends that all creation was accomplished simultaneously and instantaneously. This did not imply for him that the cosmos, as he knew it, sprang at once into being, for he distinguishes between two types of creatures--those completely created in their final form and those created only as "seeds" (rationes seminales). These seeds would mature when conditions were right. Those things created in their final form include angels, time, the four elements (earth, air, fire, and water), the stars, and men's souls. Preformed were the seeds of all living things. These seeds are the potential for all future reality.

The cosmos is unfinished, but creation is complete because all that will ever be has already been created in its germinal state. No further creation is necessary. Apparent newness in creation will simply be the effect of causes that are already there.⁷⁵

Perhaps it is Augustine's Platonism that leads him to these conclusions. They can be the logical result of thinking of being in terms of essences. God is responsible from the beginning for each thing's being what it is. Outside forces must have no influence on the creature's essence, otherwise the uniqueness of God's creative act is destroyed. Creatures cannot be responsible in any way for the essence of other creatures. Therefore, we cannot think of any originating creation taking place within the natural order.

Thomas' view that God is continually creating. For Thomas, God's creative act is not only original, it is continual. As Etienne Gilson, commenting on Thomas, points out:

If we suppose that being acts as a cause, . . . his proper effect will be the being of creatures. This effect God will not only cause at the time of their creation but so long as they last. While the sun shines, it is day; when its light ceases to reach us, it is night. So, let the divine act-of-being cease for a moment to keep things existing and there is nothingness.⁷⁶

This perspective is labeled creatio continuo². George Hendry places it alongside creatio ex nihilo and creatio per verbum as one of

⁷⁵ Etienne Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, trans. L. K. Shook (London: Victor Gollancz, 1957), p. 206.

⁷⁶ Gilson, op. cit., p. 101.

the fundamental formulae by which we understand the doctrine of creation. Whereas creation out of nothing and creation by the Word speak primarily of God's absolute origination of creation, continual creation endeavors to indicate that creation not only comes into existence by God's will and act but continues to exist by it as well. "Every moment of the world is called out of nothingness into being by the will of the creator; it is sustained by his will and absolutely dependent on it."⁷⁷ Tillich's view is parallel to Hendry's. "God is essentially creative, and, therefore, he is creative in every moment of temporal existence."⁷⁸ What both these men are saying is that being is not a self-sustaining gift but one which is constantly renewed by the giver. Through this continuous gift of being, the creator is immanent in every instant of the creation's existence.

Macquarrie's existentialist perspective also gives us a view of creatio continua. One is to think of God the Father as "primordial Being" which means that he is "the ultimate act or energy of letting-be, the condition that there should be anything whatsoever, the source not only of whatever is but of all possibilities of being."⁷⁹ These possibilities of being are actualized through the Son whom Macquarrie calls "expressive being." It is through expressive being that primordial being is poured out and the world of particular beings arise. Macquarrie

⁷⁷George S. Hendry, God the Creator, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1937).

⁷⁸Tillich, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 262.

⁷⁹Macquarrie, op. cit., p. 182.

believes that this identification of the Son with expressive being is permissible because traditional theology has identified the Son with the Logos of God, and the Logos is God's expressive being. The continuing creation of God can, therefore, be seen as God's constant expression of himself through the Logos, and this expression is the perpetual "letting-be" of the creation.⁸⁰

Providence. It is just a short step from the idea of God's continuing the act of being to the doctrine of providence. Macquarrie notes that expositions of the Christian doctrine of creation are generally followed by discussions of providence. The same God who gives the world its being is the one who continues to direct and sustain it.⁸¹

In Augustinian thought a fairly clear distinction is drawn between creation and providence. When the emphasis is placed on creation as a once and for all event in the past, it is necessary to put forward a distinct concept of providence to demonstrate God's continuing interest and involvement in his world. When one thinks along Thomistic lines, there can be no sharp separation between the two. Creaturally being is always dependent on Divine being providing it with its own being. Looking at these two ideas in greater detail makes this distinction clear.

The Augustinian separation of creation and providence seems to express what was at least the implicit view of all the Fathers. None of them speak of providence in connection with the doctrine of creation,

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Macquarrie, op. cit., p. 219.

but rather in connection with the doctrine of God. They do not seem to be thinking of creation in terms of creatio continuo. They did, however, understand that the continuing life of the creature was totally dependent on the will of God. According to Irenaeus, "He (God) grants them that they should be formed at the beginning and that they should so exist afterwards."⁸² It does not appear, however, that this continued existence is the same thing as original creation. Irenaeus does say, "The Lord has power to infuse life into what he has fashioned,"⁸³ but this is not the same as the act that brings them into existence in the first place.

From Augustine's perspective, providence cannot be connected with creation. The development of the world is the result of the continuous interaction of forces which had been created in the original creative act. God is not, however, idle. He takes care of the creation he has made both from without and within. He illumines the minds of rational creatures and offers them grace. He guides the interaction of the forces he has created, insuring the generation of the seeds he has planted. He also provides for both human and angelic oversight for non-rational matter. In Augustine's concept of providence, God does not "do" things himself. Augustine sees the infinite God working through his finite creatures. This is one reason why angels are of such crucial importance in his thinking. They are the highest order of creation. They are

⁸²Irenaeus, Against Heresies, op. cit., 11.34.2.

⁸³Ibid.

incorruptible and capable of knowing the mind of God completely. Because they are not finite, they can pass between eternity and time as God's messengers and administrators. It is largely through them that the world is unified and directed toward a harmonious goal.⁸⁴

Among more modern thinkers, Emil Brunner also separates the initial creative act from God's continuing involvement with his creation. He says:

Even if we do speak of creatio continuo we imply that even now God does not cease to create an existence distinct from his own, and a manner of existence which is different from his. If this is so, then there is also an activity of God in and on the world He has created, which is not the activity of the Creator⁸⁵ but of the Preserver, the Ruler, or even the Redeemer.

Thomas' re-interpretation of creation, in an existential rather than an essential way, made some understanding of providence as creatio continuo necessary. As previously indicated, the naked existence of creatures is dependent on God's gift of being and this must be a continuous gift. By its very nature a creature must receive its existence from another. Only God derives his existence from himself. Were a creature able to exist for an instant independent of God, it would in fact be God himself. Thus, Gilson comments:

The first effect of the Providence of God over things is the immediate and permanent influence which assures their conservation. This influence is, in some way, but the continuance of the creative act. Any interruption of this continued creation by which God maintains things⁸⁶ in being would send them instantly back into nothingness.

⁸⁴For this point I am indebted to Eugene TeSelle, Augustine the Theologian, (London: Burns and Oates, 1970), p. 220.

⁸⁵Emil Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption Dogmatics, Vol. II (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), p. 149.

⁸⁶Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas, op. cit., p. 180.

This view of providence was well established by the time of the Reformation. No one was more determined about the nature of providence than John Calvin. He insists that it is a creative act.

To represent God as a Creator for a moment, who entirely finished all his work at once, were frigate and jejune; and in this it behoves us especially to differ from the heathen, that the presence of the divine power may appear to us no less in the perpetual state of the world than in its first origin . . . Unless we proceed to his providence, we have no correct conception of the meaning of this article "that God is the Creator" . . . When it is learned that he is the creator of all things, it should immediately conclude that he is also their perpetual governor and preserver.⁸⁷

Calvin holds a very strong view of providence. Everything happens according to the will of God. Not a drop of rain falls unless he has willed it. Though the creature may disobey and stray, this too is in accordance with his will. He can easily use wicked instruments to good ends and thus insure the success of his divine plan. With characteristic Reformed scorn of metaphysics, Calvin does not specify how God creates or how his providence operates. It is simply, as the Bible says, through the Word that all is accomplished.⁸⁸

Barth carries on Calvin's idea of the Word's continual activity.

The ground of creation is God's grace and the fact that there is a grace of God is real and present to us, alive and powerful in God's Word. By God speaking and having spoken His Word in the history of Israel, in Jesus Christ, in the foundations of the Church of Jesus Christ and right up to this day and by his speaking to all futurity, the creation was and is and will be.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. John Allen (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education), I. XVI. 1.

⁸⁸ Ibid., I. XIII. 12.

⁸⁹ Barth, Dogmatics in Outline, op. cit., p. 57.

What Calvin and Barth call to our attention is their belief that creation by the Word, like creation out of nothing, is a continuing activity. All things are upheld by God's Word which creates them. They do not sustain themselves. All of creation from beginning to end is God's gracious creative act.

General Providence. Theology has always noted that an aspect of God's providential activity is his involvement in nature and history. These form what is usually referred to as "general providence." When Tillich, for example, speaks of sustaining creativity he notes that God preserves his creature by working through the natural order by insuring that that order is sufficiently consistent to sustain life. God maintains "the continuity of the structure of reality as the basis for being and acting."⁹⁰ Without this stability, the continuation of existence would be impossible. Brunner, likewise, contends that God is responsive for natural order and that it is a revelation of his power as creator. The consistency of nature shows the divine love and faithfulness. Natural law is not independent of its legislator. According to Brunner, God has given the world its "orders," and it obeys these orders.⁹¹ It would be more appropriate to use another term for these orders than natural law, for this implies something that has been established once and for all and has irrevocable force. What thinkers seem to be trying to express here is that nature appears to be governed by laws, because

⁹⁰Tillich, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 262.

⁹¹Brunner, op. cit., p. 151.

nature is governed by God who is utterly reliable in his activity toward nature. It is only on the basis of faith in a God who is not capricious, that one can have confidence in nature.

The dependability of nature has been accepted as an indication of God's faithfulness. History is an area which provides an even more reliable indication. While God's preservation of the creature is seen in his working through nature, his governing of the creature is seen in his working through history. We cannot, of course, make a clear-cut distinction between nature and history. History takes place within nature and its course is influenced by nature. Furthermore, nature itself has a history as geologists and palentologists have made us aware. Nevertheless, some theologians find it helpful to discuss preservation taking place through the natural order and governing taking place through history.

Orthodox theologians are quick to point out that a big difference between Hebrew and Greek religious thinking is the Hebraic understanding that God is a God of history and that his revelation of himself is seen most clearly in historical events. There is a purpose in history and God directs history toward the fulfillment of this purpose. Barth says:

The rule of God is the operation of God over and with the temporal history of that reality which is distinct from God: the operation by which He arranges the course of that history, maintains and executes His own will within it, and directs it wholly and utterly in accordance with that will.⁹²

⁹²Karl Barth, The Doctrine of Creation: Church Dogmatics, Vol. III, Part 3, trans. G. W. Bromiley and R. J. Ehrlich (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961), p. 164.

Whether or not nature and history provide adequate evidence of a providential God is a question we will discuss later. These two areas are usually accepted as ways in which God exercises a general providence for his creature.

Specific providence. Calvin is explicit that this provident care by God's Word is far more than a general providence--God's animation of the entire universe. Rather, God has a particular providence for each individual creature sustaining and supporting it. Even the sparrows enjoy individual care. The full grandeur of God's providence is found in just this, that he guides each creature to its appointed goal.⁹³ Barth's view of providence likewise sees God caring for each creature by preserving, accompanying, and ruling the entire course of its existence. Nothing that happens to the creature, or that the creature does, happens outside the sovereignty of God.⁹⁴

Gustaf Wingren feels that it is essential to think of creation as continual. "If we do not begin with the fact that life itself constitutes an established relationship to God the Creator, then all statements about God's sovereignty in Christ will be meaningless."⁹⁵ Only a complete misinterpretation of the doctrine of creation allows one to think of God's creative act as something in the past. To believe that the world is maintained by certain static orders of God is to deny any possibility

⁹³Calvin, Institutes, op. cit., I. XVI. 1-4.

⁹⁴Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, op. cit., Vol. III, Part 3, Para. 49.

⁹⁵Gustaf Wingren, Creation and Law, op. cit., p. 29.

of new creation and of redemption through the Word. If we look at creation as something completed in one majestic moment, we see creation in terms of results rather than the relationship of Creator to creature. We have, then, according to Wingren, "cut the nerve" of the belief in creation.⁹⁶

To understand creation properly is to understand oneself as having been created. Each individual depends on God not on the creative order. The creation of each individual is one aspect of God's continuing creation. In each man God is repeating what he did in Adam. Birth establishes one's fundamental relationship to God. Whether he acknowledges it or not, man is dependent on God for his life. Therefore, God's claim to all men's lives is totally justified. Life itself could not continue unless God was always sustaining it or creating it anew.⁹⁷ Tillich's position on providence also depends on this notion of continuing creativity. "Only in the power of being itself is the creature able to resist non-being." Such preservation is continuous creativity, for God "is creative in every moment of temporal existence giving the power of being to everything that has being out of the ground of the divine life. Tillich feels that there is no basis at all to postulate a self-dependent universe."⁹⁸

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 49.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 90

⁹⁸Tillich, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 262.

Summary. The foregoing discussion has attempted to establish the first affirmation that the doctrine of creation makes: God is the source of all existence, and the creation is totally dependent on him. Though thinkers differ as to precisely what this means, for each of them it is true. Each would insist that at its most basic level, God is responsible for whatever being there is whenever and however it appears. His creative act is not to be confused with man's. His creation is the gift of being and, therefore, establishes the relationship of absolute dependency of the creature on God for his existence. This in turn affirms that God is Lord of all creation. He is Lord, because he, and he alone, decides what will be brought into being and what will be sustained in being. The Creator is Lord because of the absolute dependency of the creation on his will that it be.

The Creation is Distinct From God and Even Though Corrupted by Sin is Fundamentally Good

We have already seen how the notion of creatio ex nihilo is used by the Fathers as a most effective weapon in defending the faith against dualistic ideas which attacked it both from within and without. Through it they could insist that there was no substance co-eternal with God and that before his creative act there was nothing. Creatio ex nihilo, however, proved to be a two-edged sword. Later on, it was used just as effectively in the conflict with the philosophical opposite of dualism, monism--or as it appears in religious dress, pantheism.

Pantheism. Like dualism, pantheism comes in many forms,⁹⁹ but fundamentally they all agree that everything that is, in so far as it is at all, is identical with God. The creation is "ontologically continuous" with the creator. Creator and creatures are essentially identical. Against those dualists who contend that God made the world out of something which he himself did not create, monists would insist that the world was made not out of matter, but out of God himself. Natural existence is in some way a manifestation of divine being.

While such ideas have some contact with the affirmations of the Christian doctrine of creation, they are ultimately opposed to it. The implicit assumption of the early writers was that in creating, God has established something distinct from himself. There is now, after God's creative act, another reality alongside him. Irenaeus makes this quite clear:

But the things are established as distinct from him who has established them and what is made from him who has made them. For he is himself uncreated . . . and lacking nothing . . . but the things which have been made by him received a beginning . . . (and) must by necessity in all respects have a different term (applied to them).¹⁰⁰

Though early theology did not clash as directly with pantheism as it did with dualism, one of the clearest indications that it rejected

⁹⁹Hartshorne and Reese locate two basic types of pantheism--oriental and European. The former having been far more "successful" than the latter. It is beyond the scope of this paper and of this writer's competence to discuss either in any detail. What is common to both is the denial of genuine reality to anything but God, either by including all things in him (European) or by stating that anything other than him is an illusion (oriental). Philosophers Speak of God. Introduction to Part 1, Section 4.

¹⁰⁰Irenaeus, op. cit., III. 8. 3.

monist thought is found in the debate between Athanasius and the Arians. The issue is, of course, the person of Christ, human or divine? While the protagonists were bitterly opposed on this issue, both agreed that to be created means to be of a substance separate from God. The Arians contended that Christ was "created," that is, made from the same substance as man, and therefore, essentially human. Athanasius insisted that Christ was of one substance with God, and therefore, essentially divine. "Created" and "divine" are incompatible. Creator and creatures are separate realities. He says, "if the Son, therefore not creature; if creature, not Son; for great is the difference between them, and Son and creature cannot be the same."¹⁰¹

To Augustine belongs the definitive statement: "non de Deo, sed ex nihilo," not from God but out of nothing.¹⁰² Clearly one factor leading Augustine to this conclusion was his realization that God and man were basically dissimilar. "God's nature is unchangeable, incorruptible, impassible and . . . the soul (which may be changed by the will unto worse and by the corruption of sin be deprived of that unchangeable light) is no part of God nor God's nature, but by him created of a far inferior mold."¹⁰³ God was infinite; man finite. The two could not logically be thought of as the same reality.

In a strange way, pantheism acknowledges this difference. Hartshorne and Reese point out that pantheism is the "label of a

¹⁰¹Athanasius, De Decretis, op. cit., III. 13.

¹⁰²Augustine, "On Marriage and Concupisence," Treatises on Marriage and Other Subjects. Fathers of the Church Series, Vol. 27 (Washington: Catholic University Press), Chapter 48.

¹⁰³Augustine, Confessions, op. cit., II. 22.

paradox," "the paradox that the unchanging and wholly necessary contains whatever is real in change and contingent."¹⁰⁴ The problem for pantheism is how can the immutable have mutable constituents, the unmodifiable have modes. Each monist system has its own way of softening the paradox by slightly altering either the unchanging nature of reality, the all-inclusiveness of this reality, or the absolute denial that there is any change at all. A discussion of any one of these answers is not important for our discussion here. What must be noted is that in pantheism, there is but the one reality, God, who is characterized by his absolute essence. He is universal, impersonal, and infinite. Now there appears to be another reality, the created order, which is individual, historical and finite. This other reality, is, however, illusory or, at best, irrelevant. Pantheism would insist that the reality of things consists in their resemblance to God. Whatever is real in things is one with God. Whatever is different is unreal.¹⁰⁵ In this view there is no value at all in creaturely existence. Gilkey explains it this way. "If finite things are God and God transcends their finite characteristics, then inevitably the creature as finite becomes unreal."¹⁰⁶

Gilkey goes on to point out that "creation" in pantheism is really a "fall" from the unity of God to the diversity of creatureliness.

¹⁰⁴ Hartshorne and Reese, op. cit., p. 165.

¹⁰⁵ I must agree with Hartshorne and Reese that this use of real and unreal is suspect, but this is beside the main point of our discussion.

¹⁰⁶ Gilkey, op. cit., p. 62.

This world is an unreality, which exists because we are separated from the unity of God. Hence, there is no value in creaturely existence. It is something to be denied. The "really real" is beyond space-time existence. The unavoidable result of this type of thinking is asceticism--a complete withdrawal from the realities (non-realities?) of life.¹⁰⁷

Ontological discontinuity of creator and creation. Such a view of creation obviously conflicts with the one set forth in Christian thought. In insisting upon the ontological discontinuity of Creator and creation, theologians are not denying the reality of either. Rather, they are affirming the reality of both. Both halves of the change-unchanging, mutable-immutable, finite-infinite dichotomy are real. Thomas is quite clear that God, in his creative act, gives the creature being, but God does not give the creature his own being or any part of his own being. He gives him creaturely existence, which is not the same as divine existence. It is a real existence, nonetheless. Thomas argues that the mistake the monist Parmenides made was in using the term "being" as though it could have only one meaning and then insisting that only one reality can, therefore, exist. To be other than this one being is simply not to exist. Aquinas insisted that there were various types of being not all of the same genus.¹⁰⁸

Finite things are not, therefore, modifications of divine being. Creatures are dependent on God, but they are also distinct from him. Barth puts this quite poetically:

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Aquinas, Summa Theologica, op. cit., Ia. 76. 2. See also Metaphysics, 1. c. 5. Lec. 9.

Has not each of us put to himself the question whether this entire world around us might not really be a seeming and a dream? Has not this come over you too as a fundamental doubt--not of God; that is a stupid doubt! but--of yourself? Is the whole enchantment in which we exist real? Or is not that which we regard as reality only the 'veil of Maya' and thus unreal? The statement on creation (the first article of the Creed) is opposed to this horrible thought.¹⁰⁹

The reason the Christian knows the monist to be wrong, Barth contends, is, of course, Christological. God himself decided to become part of creation in Jesus Christ and to exist as we exist. "Because God has become man, the existence of the world can no longer be doubted."¹¹⁰

The goodness of creation. By denying or attenuating the reality of creation, monists are also denying its goodness. The world is to be shunned, for value lies only in oneness with God from which the world is estranged by its individuality and multiplicity. The Christian profession has, however, always been an echo of another verdict--God's evaluation that the world he created was good. "God saw all that he had made, and indeed, it was good."¹¹¹

Fundamentally, the doctrine of creation has insisted that creation is good because God has evaluated it so. Since he in his omniscience pronounced it good, it is good. For some thinkers, particularly within the Reformed tradition, this is adequate enough to establish the fact. Barth, for example, says, "We must not desire to know a priori what goodness is or to grumble if the world does not

¹⁰⁹Barth, Dogmatics in Outline, op. cit., p. 53.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Genesis 1:30, The Jerusalem Bible.

correspond to it."¹¹² For Bonhoeffer, "Because the world is God's world, it is good."¹¹³ He expands this further by saying:

... it is good only in the way that the creaturely can be good; because the Creator views it, acknowledges it and says of it: 'It is good.' God views his work and only this makes the work good. This means particularly that the work is good only because the creator alone is good. The goodness of the work is never in the work itself, but only in the Creator.¹¹⁴

God's declaration of the creation's goodness is the only criterion we have for determining it is so. God has not borrowed a word from men's vocabularies and used it to describe his creation. He himself gives meaning and definition to the word. Had he not called it good, we should never know that it was good.

If this is the proper perspective, then one cannot go beyond his faith for his assurance that the world is good. This is, of course, what Barth and Bonhoeffer would want, but the philosophic tradition in theology has never been satisfied with this approach. It has insisted that man as well as God must be able, at least to a limited extent, to pronounce the world good. Augustine, I believe, while feeling that in the final analysis belief in created goodness was an act of faith, would hold that reason could assist faith in reaching this conclusion.

Augustine equated being and goodness. "Every entity, even if it is a defective one, in so far as it is an entity, is good."¹¹⁵ He

¹¹²Barth, Dogmatics in Outline, op. cit., p. 58.

¹¹³Bonhoeffer, Creation and Fall, op. cit., p. 22.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 32.

¹¹⁵Augustine, Enchiridion, op. cit., IV. 13.

suggests that God has given everything measure, form, and order. These are three essentials of being. Nothing can be if it does not possess, to some degree, each of these. If they are present in a creature to a high degree, the creature is very good. If they are present to a lesser degree, the creature is less good. But no creature could lack any one of them entirely. Since all creatures have these perfections to some degree, all creatures are correspondingly good to the same degree. In his Confessions Augustine maintains this belief even in the face of evil:

And it was made clear to me that all things are good even if they are corrupted. . . . unless they were good they could not be corrupted. If they were supremely good, they would be incorruptable; if they were not good at all, there would be nothing in them to be corrupted. . . . If then they are deprived of all good, they will cease to exist. So long as they exist, they are good.¹¹⁶

Now each creature in itself is not wholly good but just partially good. Nothing, no matter how perfect it is, equals God's goodness. To cite the Enchiridion:

By this Trinity, supremely and equally and immutably good, were all things created. But they were not created supremely, equally, nor immutably good. Still, each single created thing is good, and taken as a whole they are very good because together they constitute a universe of admirable beauty.¹¹⁷

In this last statement, Augustine indicates why he feels the world can be called good. Taken as a whole it displays an "admirable beauty." The influence of neo-Platonic thought with its aesthetic understanding of creation is very apparent. The cosmos is regarded as an infinitely vast work of art whose beauty lies in the totality of the

¹¹⁶ Augustine, Confessions, op. cit., VII. 13.

¹¹⁷ Augustine, Enchiridion, op. cit., III. 10.

work. When viewed from a cosmic perspective, which of course only God can do, the beauty and goodness of creation are strikingly evident. One does not, therefore, look at the individual parts of the picture, for they are only more or less beautiful in themselves. One seeks to see the work as a whole and therein discern its goodness. Such thinking has been the dominant idea in Christian thought and is still the basis of much Roman Catholic doctrine.

For Augustine, and even more for Thomas, to ascribe essential goodness to the created order was not to insist, as Leibniz later did, that this is the best of all possible worlds. According to Thomas, God could have created a better universe than this one, but it would have been a different one. He could not have created this universe better than he did, and this universe could not be improved and still remain the same universe.¹¹⁸ One cannot contend that the creation is totally and completely good. Augustine points to Jesus' statement, "None is good save God alone," to indicate that the world is not perfect. Nonetheless, both Augustine and Thomas would insist that the creation is basically and overwhelmingly good.

The problem of evil. Such a view has been labeled "aesthetic optimism." Everything is really quite good. The reason one does not see that is that he does not see all there is to see. When one thinks this way, the question that inevitably must be asked is, "What about evil?" Is this reality not being overlooked? How in a fundamentally

¹¹⁸ Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, op. cit., I. 25. 6.

good world can the abundance of suffering, misfortune, pain, and ignorance that is found be explained? Are the dark colors not somewhat overwhelming, destroying the alleged beauty of the composition?

The problem of evil is an ancient one. Apparently, it was first formulated philosophically by Epicurus around 300 B.C. He posed it as a dilemma: If God is perfectly good, he must want to abolish all evil; if he is ultimately powerful, he must be able to abolish all evil: but evil exists; therefore, God is either not perfectly good or ultimately powerful. Stated this way, there is no solution. Either God must bear some of the blame or else the severity of evil must be minimized. Thomas saw the problem of evil as the first obstacle to Christian theism. Simpler men have, through the ages, felt that the contention of God's goodness is refuted by the existence of evil.

Both dualism and monism, which Christianity opposes, have ready and, in many ways, satisfying answers to the problem of evil. In the gnostic systems, for example, the world is not created by God but by a second power, a demiurge. Sometimes this is an evil power which purposely created evil. Other times he is simply inept and incapable of making a totally perfect world. Another example is the idea in Plato's Timaeus that the matter out of which the craftsman created was recalcitrant and not wholly obedient to his manipulation. Try as he might, he just did not have the proper material out of which to create a totally good world.

Monist systems have every bit as easy an answer. The world is evil, but the world is also an illusion. Therefore, evil is simply illusory. The only reality is God. Whatever evil we think exists is

the result of our separation from the infinite. When we achieve union with the One, our various illusions of evil will vanish. This summary is over-simplified, but it does indicate the monist approach to the problem.

Definition of evil. Before proceeding farther, we should check to make sure we know what we are talking about. Just what is this phenomenon called evil that is so upsetting to the Christian belief in created goodness? Hick gives one compact answer. Theologically, he says, whatever tends to fulfill the divine purpose in the world is good. Whatever thwarts it is bad.¹¹⁹ Evil is the negation of the goodness God wants for his creation.

This definition owes much to Aristotle who suggested that the happiness of any creature consisted of its fulfillment of its own telos--the realization of its nature and potentiality. Everything is created toward some end and completely satisfied only in reaching it. Theology has never stopped at this point, but has always added its own essential belief that individual fulfillment is supported by the cosmic process. Human nature, for example, is basically in harmony with the structures of nature and can, therefore, be fulfilled and not thwarted. Furthermore, since the universe is God's creation and ruled by him, there is a reasonable guarantee that such is always possible.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹Hick, op. cit., p. 17.

¹²⁰Ibid. Hick's contention here is actually stronger than stated. Since this is God's world, fulfillment is guaranteed--not just always possible.

Hick specifies three types of evil: (1) natural evil, that which man does not originate--such things as earthquakes, floods, and disease; (2) moral evil, that for which man is responsible--war, despotism, tyranny; and (3) metaphysical evil, which refers to the unavoidable complications imposed by the essential limitation and finitude of the creation's being created. Simply because this is a created world and not ungenerate like its creator, there lurks within it the possibility of evil.

Norris points out that Irenaeus' thinking went along this route. God could not create something and have it be uncreated. This would be a logical contradiction. Therefore, there is a limitation on his power. He cannot do what is logically impossible and no one should insist that he do so. To ask that God create a world possessing the attributes of a non-created order is ridiculous.¹²¹

For the creature to be created implies that it will be different from God. It will be changeable and corruptable. For all his scorn of philosophy, Irenaeus uses Plato's descriptions of the world of becoming as his descriptions of the created order. The created order is not eternal but capable of change. Creatures are imperfect and liable either to grow or to decay.¹²²

Augustine, too, saw the root of evil in the creation's creaturely status. He believed that it was because things were created out of

¹²¹Norris, op. cit., p. 93.

¹²²Irenaeus, Against Heresies, op. cit., IV. 38. 1-3.

nothing that they were capable of being muted and corrupted.¹²³ This suggests the same sort of limitation as Irenaeus found. God cannot make the creature immutable, for to do so would be to make him a divine being. Augustine is opposed to any idea of emanation that sees the creature participating to any degree in God's being. There is an absolute gap between the creator and his creatures, because the creatures were created out of nothing and God was simply not created.

Augustine saw evil as a privatio boni---a privation of the good. As has already been noted, he feels that all things are created fundamentally good. Evil must then be seen as a corruption of the intended nature of an entity. Evil is not for him a positive thing. It is negative. It is not so much something that an entity possesses but something that an entity lacks.¹²⁴

Aquinas followed Augustine's teaching. He points out that this "privation" is not precisely the same thing as "absence." It is the absence of something the entity should by right have.

Evil denotes the absence of a good. But it is not every absence of good that is called evil. For absence of good can be understood either in a privative sense or in a purely negative sense, and absence of good in the latter sense is not evil. . . . It is absence of good in the privative sense which is called evil.¹²⁵

An example that Aquinas uses of this distinction is blindness.¹²⁶

¹²³Augustine, City of God, op. cit., XIV. 13.

¹²⁴Augustine, Confessions, op. cit., III. 7. 12.

¹²⁵Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, op. cit., I. 48. 3.

¹²⁶Ibid., I. 48. 5.

Blindness in a man is evil because a man is meant to see and he is deprived of his sight. It is not, however, evil in a stone which was not meant to see and is, therefore, not deprived of anything it was meant to have. "Evil is the absence of the good which is natural and due a thing."¹²⁷

This is an easily comprehended illustration, but other examples are less so. What about brain tumors? Are they privations? The answer is, yes, but not intrinsically. The privation, and therefore the evil, is not in the thing itself, but rather in the disorder it creates. The evil of a tumor is found in its relationship to the person possessing it. The tumor, were it isolated from anything, would not be called evil because it would create no privation, but when the tumor impairs one's motor facilities and deprives one of the ability to walk, then it is evil.

Aquinas does not restrict this analysis to natural evil alone. It is also true that moral evil is a privation. Moral evil is the privation of the free human act of the relationship it ought to have to the moral law promulgated by reason of the divine law.

By thinking of evil as privatio boni, Augustine and Aquinas are preserving their claim that the created order is basically good. All things are originally created good, and evil is an intruder who distorts and deprives. Evil must not be regarded as an independent force existing on its own. Aquinas pointed out that evil had no being of its own. It was parasitic living off the good. Were evil to destroy the good from

¹²⁷Ibid., I. 49. 1.

which it derives its existence, it would destroy itself. Nothing can, therefore, be completely evil. As a privation, evil can exist only in a being. It is not fundamental but incidental. Before there can be a privation, there must be something to be deprived.¹²⁸

Since evil cannot exist without the good, Aquinas quotes with approval Augustine's conclusion, "There is no possible source of evil except good." Aquinas goes on to show how this is so by using Aristotle's categories of causes:

Now that good is the cause of evil by way of the material cause was shown (when) it was shown that good is the subject of evil. But evil has no formal cause, rather it is a privation of form; likewise, neither has it a final cause, but rather is it a privation of order to the proper end.¹²⁹

There is, however, an efficient cause of evil. Evil can be seen as the improper effect of an efficient cause. This happens when an efficient cause cannot produce its desired effect without depriving something else of its perfection. Fire will deprive air of oxygen and turn water into vapor. It does not set out to do this, but in achieving its own perfection these privations result. They are not intentional but accidental. Aquinas feels confident in concluding that "evil in no way has any but an accidental cause; and thus is good the cause of evil."¹³⁰

Even though evil may be caused per accidens, it seems inevitable. Since created things participate both in being and non-being, the tragic

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

flaw is there. Perhaps then God should not have created anything at all. Maybe it would have been best for there never to have been a creation, but rather just the perfection of the Trinity.

Not so, say theologians. It is best that there be a creation, Augustine would contend, because greater beauty is achieved by there being the greatest possible variety of forms. From Plato he borrows what has been called the "Principle of Plenitude" which insists that a universe of all possible beings is better than one of just the highest type of being.

Augustine says there are really two questions which must be answered in respect to the one question why God created anything at all. The first question is, why should God create corruptible natures? In answering this, Augustine points out that the beings which die are good, but they are replaced by other beings which are also good. Good things follow good things the former making room for the latter. Augustine sees in this change a certain beauty that would be lacking without it.¹³¹ It is not, therefore, a bad thing that entities have corruptible natures for the progression itself is essential to harmonious ordering of the universe. From this standpoint we would perhaps be correct in saying that Augustine would find greater beauty in a symphony where beautiful chords follow one another than in just one lovely chord eternally sustained. God, like man, must find variety pleasing and, therefore desirable.

¹³¹ Augustine, City of God, op. cit., XII. 4.

The second question concerns man specifically. "How could a good God create men with the ability to choose evil?" Some background to this question needs to be given.

Sin and evil: The Augustinian viewpoint. Augustine called voluntary evil sin. Evil is, as we have seen, inevitably present in the cosmic process, since the cosmos was created ex nihilo. Over this tragic flaw, metaphysical evil, man has no control. There are, however, voluntary evils over which man has control--evils which are caused when the creature wills something that he should not, when he opts for something contrary to God's divine will. In other words, he wills something other than God wills. For this reason Augustine can see sin, like all other evil, as a privation--the absence in man's will of the true love of God. In the City of God he says:

Let none, therefore, seek the efficient cause of an evil will: for it is not efficient but deficient, nor is there effect but defect: namely falling from that highest essence unto a lower, this is to have an evil will.¹³²

Augustine, through all of this, is insisting that the will is free to choose less than the best for itself. All decisions are an act of the will and this willing is always for the sake of attaining some value, even though it may be an insignificant or inappropriate one.¹³³ The question being asked is: Is such a free will good? Again we get an affirmative answer. The problem is not with free will itself, but with the use to which it is put. Just as one cannot condemn fire outright

¹³² Augustine, City of God, op. cit., XII. 7.

¹³³ Augustine, Confessions, op. cit., II. 4. 8.

if it burns rather than just giving warmth, so one cannot condemn the will if it is not used for a good end. Just as there are things which the body can misuse, so there are good things which the soul can misuse. The fault is in both cases with the user and not with the thing itself. God has made the will master of itself and made it capable of adhering to the sovereign good or of not adhering to it. The will has the power to do either. The fall of the will is not a necessary fall, such as that of a stone pulled to the earth by gravity. It is the fall of the will letting itself go.¹³⁴ Thus Augustine sees the cause of sin as "the defection of the will of a being which is mutable from the Good which is immutable."¹³⁵

There is no answer, however, to the next logical question: What makes the will defect? One simply cannot know. Sin, like grace, is ultimately a mystery beyond rationalization. Augustine says it would be impossible to analyze a deficient cause, since this would be an analysis of nothing.¹³⁶

Even though man is capable of sinning, his sin will not ultimately result in total destruction. We mentioned above that God was not the cause of evil. His responsibility extended only to permitting its occurrence. This must not be thought of as a divine fault for two reasons: The presence of evil makes good seem all the better; and out

¹³⁴ Augustine, City of God, op. cit., XII. 7.

¹³⁵ Augustine, Enchiridion, op. cit., VIII. 23.

¹³⁶ Augustine, City of God, op. cit., XII. 7. (Though Augustine obviously meant this idea to be taken seriously, I find it more clever than convincing.)

of evil man creates, God can make even greater good. In the Enchiridion Augustine says:

In this universe, even what is called evil, when it is rightly ordered and kept in its place, commends the good more eminently, since good things yield greater pleasure and praise when compared to the bad things. For the Omnipotent God, whom even the heathen acknowledge as the Supreme Power over all, would not allow any evil in his works, unless in him omnipotence and goodness, as the Supreme God he is able to bring forth good out of evil.¹³⁷

Augustine and Aquinas both talk as though the world is actually a better place because of the evil in it. Aquinas insists that many good things would be lost if God permitted no evil.

The order of the universe requires . . . that there should be some things that can and do sometimes fall. And thus God by causing in things the good of the order of the universe, consequently as it were by accident causes the corruption of things.¹³⁸

Augustine puts the matter quite convincingly. "God judged it better to bring good out of evil than not to permit any evil to exist."¹³⁹ Evil is the necessary basis for God's redeeming activity in Christ. A world saved by God's grace is a better world than one created already perfect. If there had been no sin, God could not have shown the full extent of his love. According to Aquinas, "the justification of the ungodly which terminates at the eternal good of a share in the Godhead is greater than the creation of heaven and earth which terminates at the good of a mutable nature."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Augustine, Enchiridion, op. cit., III. 2.

¹³⁸ Aquinas, Summa Theologica, op. cit., I. 49. 2.

¹³⁹ Augustine, Enchiridion, op. cit., VIII. 27.

¹⁴⁰ Aquinas, Summa Theologica, op. cit., II. 113. 9.

The approach to evil we have been discussing can be summarized in this way. Evil does exist because the creation is, by its very nature, imperfect and, therefore, capable of exhibiting imperfection. Evil must always be seen as a privation of an entity's lacking something that it ought to have. This is true both of moral and natural evil. Evil is parasitic living off the good, which can, therefore, be called its cause. Were there no good, there could be no evil. The apparent horror of evil is less than we assume, since when we look at the universe as a whole we find good outstripping evil. Though each part in itself may not be lovely, taken as a whole the creation displays great beauty. Furthermore, evil is not final. God can and does use it to effect great good. The greatest good of all having been achieved through the greatest evil in the death and resurrection of Christ.

The most penetrating objection raised to this approach to the problem of evil is that the pieces get lost in the whole. It is a highly impersonal answer and existentially very unsatisfying. The interest and emphasis is on the whole and not on its parts. The value of each individual creature is minimized, since one is told to look at the whole of creation as the place where value ultimately resides. It seems to make no difference if some evil exists, so long as good dominates. Aside from the issue as to whether or not there is any way (other than an appeal to revelation) to establish that good actually does dominate, one wonders if this says anything at all to someone caught up in the agony of evil. The horror, the detestability, the vileness of one's experience of evil is trivialized. Hick is utterly disgusted that

Thomist thought cannot only tolerate but actually find satisfaction in the existence of a cholera germ.¹⁴¹

Finally, one wonders if there is not a slight contradiction in this way of thinking. If evil contributes to the good, why resist or attempt to eradicate it? If it is true that the greatest good, however, is the eradication of evil such as happened in the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, is there any reason to speak of evil as contributing to goodness? In other words, if the most beautiful creation is the one in which Christ has eliminated all the dark colors, why speak of the contribution they make to the beauty of the whole. If the dark colors are needed for the creation to be beautiful, with what sort of soteriology is one left?

Sin and evil: The Irenaean viewpoint. There is, however, another way of looking at evil which, its advocates believe, is more existentially satisfying. Hick has labeled the approach we have just discussed "Augustinian," due to its dependence on his thought. Hick points out that this is the dominant tradition in Christian theology, having persisted via Thomas through the middle ages and via Calvin through the Reformation. Barth is a contemporary example of one who thinks as Augustine did. Augustinian thinking on the problem of evil dominates both Roman and Reformed theology. Another approach does exist, however, and even though it has not had nearly as much prominence, it is, to Hick, vastly superior. This approach he calls "Irenaean."

¹⁴¹Hick, op. cit., p. 169.

Irenaeus does not concern himself with the problem of natural evil. For him the problem is strictly the moral one and is contained within the single question, "Could not God have exhibited man as perfect from the beginning?" We have already noted his insistence that since man is created ex nihilo, he cannot be perfect.¹⁴² This is the fundamental explanation of evil. So far, Irenaeus and Augustine would be in agreement. From this point forward though, Irenaeus takes another road.

Even though God could not logically create man perfect, it is within his power to perfect the man he has created. God first creates and then perfects. Irenaeus looks upon man as being childlike in the sense of incomplete, unfinished, capable of growth and development. Man enters the world not only a physical child, but a spiritual one as well. We could not be created perfect because we could not tolerate it anymore than we could tolerate solid food. As a created being, man must be nurtured as is a child to attain the glory that is his. This is, in fact, exactly what God does. Irenaeus states it this way:

Now it was necessary that man should in the first instance receive growth; and having received growth should be strengthened; and having been strengthened should abound and having abounded, should recover (from the disease of sin); and having recovered should be glorified; and having been glorified should see his Lord.¹⁴³

In Irenaeus' view, man is made only potentially perfect. To actualize this potential, man must be taught to see what perfection is and where it lies. The best way, perhaps the only, for man to know and

¹⁴² Irenaeus, Against Heresies, op. cit., IV. 38. 1.

¹⁴³ Ibid., IV. 38. 3.

love the good is to see it in contrast with evil. Evil must, therefore, be included within the world. Irenaeus draws these comparisons:

For just as the tongue receives experience of sweet and bitter by means of tasting, and the eye discriminates between black and white by means of vision, and the ear recognizes the distinctions of sounds by hearing; so also does the mind receiving through experience the knowledge of what is good become more tenacious of its preservation by acting in obedience to God.¹⁴⁴

Even though Irenaeus speaks of man being created initially without sin, there is really no doctrine of the fall in his writings. Even though man should have known better and is responsible for the state he finds himself in, his sin is more the result of immaturity than conscious rebellion against God. Man is responsible for his sin, but his sin is not the malignant catastrophic event for Irenaeus it is for Augustine. It is difficult to understand how man's proper growth could take place without evil being present. Since evil actually assists in the proper growth of man, it serves a good cause and its existence is justified. Evil will, however, be eliminated as God perfects man and goodness will ultimately triumph. Irenaeus' thinking is highly eschatological. God through Christ is recapitulating his creation, and there will be a final consummation when the devil and his powers will be brought to nothing.

The Irenaeian approach to evil does maintain the essential goodness of creation in spite of the fact of evil. Irenaeus would not contend that evil is a good thing or even the lack of a good thing, but he would insist that it is a good thing that evil be overcome as this is

¹⁴⁴Ibid., IV. 39. 1.

how man will finally achieve his union with God. Man's struggle with evil has great significance for it is the way to his salvation.

Tertullian had an even more positive attitude toward evil--at least that specific evil which the Christians of his time were facing--the persecutions. He is quite clear that it is only by God's will that the persecutions are taking place. He wills them to be a winnowing fan cleansing the church of the chaff who would deny God in adversity. Christians ought not, therefore, flee from persecution but face it boldly because God will guard them even in this, and they will then be assured of their eternal bliss. God, Tertullian believes, actually delivers Christians into the hands of the devil so they can be tempted, punished, or humbled.¹⁴⁵

Granted that the goodness of God and his creation is maintained by the Irenaean approach to evil, but here as in the Augustinian approach not evil trivialized. The great enemy of God is really his servant. Evil, like the pain of the dentist's drill, is not really as bad as it seems when one is experiencing it. Certainly there are those who have struggled with evil, overcome it, and been better off because of it, but does not the whole idea collapse if the person beset by evil collapses under the weight of evil as often happens?¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, is not the ability to resist or respond positively to evil at least as much the result of one's physical, psychic, and social status as his spiritual status?

¹⁴⁵ Tertullian, De Fuga in Persecutions, Ch. 1., cited by Roberts, The Theology of Tertullian (London: The Epworth Press, 1924), p. 232.

¹⁴⁶ Hick, op. cit., p. 366.

To draw a lengthy discussion to its close, we will summarize briefly what has been said about this second contention that the creation, even though corrupted by sin, is basically good. The goodness of the creation is dependent on the goodness of its creator. It is good because he made it and evaluated it as good. It is, therefore, from the creator's perspective and not necessarily the creatures' that this statement can be made. Even though evil from our vantage point may seem to cast doubt on created goodness, evil has not overcome goodness and can in diverse ways be seen as aiding and abetting goodness. Evil is never seen as a force outside God's control but rather as something he can and does use in maintaining the creation's goodness. There are problems with evil but they exist only from the creature's side and not from God's.

We may justifiably close this part of our discussion by asking, If evil is the servant of God and completely under his control, why did God have to go to the extremes he did in the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection to overcome it. If evil serves good ends, why bother to eliminate it? The only possible answer to this question is that redemption from sin and evil is an even greater good, but this still does not seem to be an adequate enough reason for the high price God had to pay for man's salvation.

Creation is a Free Act of God's Gracious Love

In the last section we mentioned that one reason for accepting that the world was good was that it was created by a good God. This leads us to our final assertion that the creation is a free act of God's

gracious love. Much of what could be said under this heading has already been said in the previous discussions, and we will repeat only when necessary. The question being answered in this final section is, "Was God's creative act necessary; and if not, what reason might there be for it?" The answer being given is that God's creative act was not compelled by anything outside himself. God was not forced to create. He did not have to bring the world into existence. It was his own decision to do so. Furthermore, the choice as to whether or not any particular creature shall exist is his as well. If it is appropriate to look for any motive in God's creating, it can only be his goodness. There is not other external or internal motivation.

According to both classical metaphysics and orthodox theology, God certainly does not need his creation. He is already perfect and nothing could be added to him. There is no deficiency which must be made up. He can gain nothing by creating. Barth states it bluntly:

God has no need of us. He has no need of the world and heaven and earth at all. He is rich in Himself. He has fulness of life; all glory, all beauty, all goodness and holiness reside in Him. He is sufficient unto Himself; He is God, blessed in Himself.

He then states further:

To what end, then, the world? Here in fact there is everything here in the living God. How can there be something alongside God of which He has no need? This is the riddle of creation.¹⁴⁷

According to this view, God is unconditioned and self-sufficient, depending on nothing else for any part of his reality. Because he does not need to create his act is free. If there were this necessity, then

¹⁴⁷ Barth, Dogmatics in Outline, op. cit., p. 54.

freedom would be denied. Since God was not forced to create, his creative act is, at least for thinkers like Barth, a mystery. Why should God not want to be alone? There is no rational answer to this question.

Bonhoeffer sees in the opening sentence of Genesis a statement of God's freedom in creating. "'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' That means that the Creator, in freedom, creates the creature."¹⁴⁸ Since there could be nothing before the beginning, there could be nothing pushing God to create. Between creature and creator, he says, there is nothing except the void, and creation comes out of this void.¹⁴⁹ To say the same thing in language we have been using throughout this thesis, since God created ex nihilo, there is nothing conditioning his creating.

We have noticed two things about God's creative act: He was and is not compelled by necessity to create; and his creating is completely unconditioned. Nothing limits, restrains, or determines what he does. It is a completely free act. We have so far cited only the neo-orthodox view, but Tillich, speaking from another perspective, is just as emphatic:

There is no ground prior to Him which could condition his freedom; neither chaos nor non-being has power to limit or resist Him. . . . Freedom means that man's ultimate concern is in no way dependent on man or on any finite being or on any finite concern. . . . A conditioned God is no God.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Bonhoeffer, op. cit., p. 14.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Tillich, op. cit., p. 248.

By thinking this way God's ontological transcendence is insured. To be totally free he must neither be dependent on nor limited by his creatures and his creation. The unbridgable gap between man and God must be seen and acknowledged. Brunner begins his discussion of the doctrine of creation from this point of reference. We must, he says, drop altogether any idea of a correlation between God and world which would make it impossible to think of one without the other and think instead of God who is apart from his world and Lord over it. This Lordship is dependent on his being totally free in his creative act.¹⁵¹ As mentioned before, Brunner finds this the idea which the concept of creatio ex nihilo has maintained. "The truth that God is the One who determines all things and is determined by none is the precise meaning of the idea of Creation as creatio ex nihilo."¹⁵²

God wills to create. If God is absolutely free, the only possible reason for his creating is that he wanted to create. Theologians have, therefore, insisted that God willed to create. Brunner tells us not only to think of God in terms of his eternal Being, but also in terms of his eternal Will.¹⁵³ God willed that there should be a creation and there was one. This is the reason why there is a creation, and we need look for no other. "The Creation is because God wills it; it has no other foundation. God's will is the ratio sufficiens of the Creation."¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹Brunner, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁵²Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 13.

Even if we accept that God's will is the reason for his creating, are we forced to stop with this will's inscrutability or can we repeat the question we asked in the preceding section, "Why does God will to create?" Fortunately, most thinkers have not considered it impertinent to ask this and have suggested what it is in God's being that should cause him to will to create. Brunner, for one, says we should not think only of God's being "as-he-is-in-Himself" but also of his "being-for-us." It is because he is for us even before we are created that we are brought into being.¹⁵⁵

Implied in what has been stated above is the contention we encountered earlier that what God does is the expression of what he is. When Brunner says that part of what God is is being-for-us, he is commenting on what he sees as God's essential nature. Traditional theology has always seen one indispensable attribute of God being his goodness. Being-for-us and, therefore, creating us must be regarded as expressions of God's goodness. Augustine puts it in this way:

And by the words 'God saw that it was good,' it is sufficiently intimated that God made what was made not from any necessity nor for the sake of supplying any want, but solely from his own goodness.¹⁵⁶

The answer Augustine is giving to the question of why God wills to create is that God being good could not help but do this good thing. William Temple has dubbed this idea "spiritual determinism" and insists that such determinism is always part of freedom. One will always act in accordance with what seems good to him. This is, however, radically

¹⁵⁵Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁵⁶Augustine, City of God, op. cit., XI. 24.

different from mechanical or organic determinism. "It is determinism by what seems good as contrasted with determination by irresistible compulsion."¹⁵⁷

The reasoning here is basically an extension of the reasoning used by some thinkers in making the second point discussed above. In that discussion we noted that they began with the revelation of God's goodness received in Christ and, from this, concluded that one who was Goodness itself could not create something that was not good (or at least did not have the potential for goodness). The statement now under consideration takes this back one further step. The very act of creation itself is a good thing. All that God does is good; therefore, his creative act must be good. Since we know the cook, we do not have to prove the pudding by tasting.

When theologians speak of God's willing to create they usually contend that he had a good purpose in creating---that the bringing of the world into existence was not a whim or a fancy but something done with purpose. For this reason it is possible for creatures to find meaning in their existence. Though the answer is phrased differently with each thinker, it seems fair to generalize and say that they believe God's purpose in creating was to give and receive love. Augustine and Thomas were agreed that it is better for there to be all possible orders of being than just the one highest order, because the greatest possible variety of creatures gives God the greatest possible scope for showing his love.

¹⁵⁷William Temple, Nature, Man and God (New York: Macmillian Company, 1949), p. 229.

The reason Tertullian gives for God's creating the world is that it exists so there can be something to reflect God's glory. "What we worship is the only God, who by his Word . . . drew out of nothing for the glorification of his majesty this whole immense system."¹⁵⁸ Calvin, several centuries later, echoed this, saying that the purpose behind creation was for it to be a "theatrum gloriae Dei." Barth in our own generation finds this answer totally acceptable and says:

. . . if we inquire into the goal of creation, the object of the whole, the object of heaven and earth and all creation, I can only say it is to be the theatre of His glory. The meaning is that God is being glorified . . . Whatever objections may be raised against the reality of the world, it's goodness incontestably consists in the fact that it may be the theatre of His glory.¹⁵⁹

The creation is good, because, through it all, honor and glory may be given God. The chief end of the whole creation is to glorify God.

While Barth follows Calvin here, Brunner is closer to Luther's idea that God's purpose in creation is to have loving communion with his creatures. Thus Brunner says:

God creates the world because He wills to communicate Himself, because He wishes to have something 'over against' Himself. As the Holy God He wills to glorify Himself in His Creation; as the loving God He wills to give himself to others. His self glorification, however, is in the last resort the same as His self communication. He wills so to glorify Himself that that which He gives is received in freedom and rendered back to Him again: His love.¹⁶⁰

Brunner has here pointed out the mutual compatibility of the creation being the sphere where God can be glorified and where God's love can be

¹⁵⁸ Tertullian, Against Hermogenes, op. cit., 21. 3.

¹⁵⁹ Barth, Dogmatics in Outline, op. cit., p. 58.

¹⁶⁰ Brunner, op. cit., p. 13.

given and returned, the second being the way in which the first is accomplished. Brunner concludes his discussion by stating precisely the point under our consideration: "This love of His is at the same time the revelation of the purpose of His Creation, and this purpose of Creation is the reason why He posits a Creation. The love of God is the causa finalis of the Creation."¹⁶¹

Brunner, of course, insists that we know this only because of the revelation given us in Jesus Christ. What we know specifically from this revelation is:

. . . that the purpose of the world is in God: that in it God wills His Glory; in it He wills to rule; and in it He wills to bring man--through His self-manifestation into fellowship with Himself. The purpose, and therefore, the fundamental meaning of Creation, is the Kingdom of God.¹⁶²

God wills there to be a creation so there can be a Kingdom of God--a reciprocal relationship of love between Creator and creatures.

While all this sounds fine, we must agree with Tillich that Calvinist and Lutheran theologies are not as effective as they should be in maintaining both the non-necessity of creation and that there is a real and genuine purpose in creation. Calvinism's contention that the purpose of creation is to give God glory seems a bit strange since Calvin's thought would insist that God is the only cause of his glory and would, therefore, have no need for the world to give it back to him. Lutheran ideas of God creating in order to have loving communion with his creatures is also suspect, since reciprocal love can only be

¹⁶¹Ibid.

¹⁶²Ibid., p. 14.

interdependent, the lovers needing each other. Both ideas seem to suggest either there is some real need for the creature or there is really no purpose in creation.¹⁶³

ADDITIONAL ISSUES

The Participation of Creatures in Creative Act

At this point, it would be well to focus on an issue that has arisen several times. Earlier, we noted how the various thinkers throughout the centuries have insisted that divine creation is radically different from non-divine. Although the question of what meaning can then be given to the word create is discussed elsewhere, it seems appropriate to note what role, if any, various thinkers have seen factors other than God playing in the creative process. The question being asked is: Does the creature participate in the act of creation or is this solely God's activity?

Augustine allows that while the essence of each creature was contained in the rationes seminales which God created, secondary factors are responsible, working under the providence of God, for bringing these seeds into the full fruition of what they were meant to be.¹⁶⁴ The seeds will develop according to the divine plan. These outside factors will not influence their essence, but rather be the means for carrying out the divine plan. The Genesis' accounts of creation show how some of these seeds, which were all created simultaneously, came into full being

¹⁶³Tillich, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 264.

¹⁶⁴See pages 35-36.

in an orderly, temporal sequence. Other seeds still remain to be developed. Although secondary factors are important in this development, they do not influence creation. Each creature is created in germinal form by God, and his providence governs each creature's development. God alone is creator. This word cannot be used for anything or anyone else.

Aquinas' view gave considerably more scope for the activity of secondary causes.¹⁶⁵ We noted that he believed God to be the giver of being but that other causes played a part in determining specific being. He says, "All things seek to be like God by being causes of others."¹⁶⁶ Secondary causes are not, however, like the first cause because they do not give being itself. Their role is to determine the contours of the being that the First Cause provides. Thomas rejects Peter Lombard's idea that God's power of creation can be communicated by God to a creature. Any contribution the creature makes to creation will be the result of its own innate power and not God's. The creature simply cannot do what God does. He cannot call into being that which was not.¹⁶⁷ Even though there is a categorical division between what is divine and what is non-divine creativity, secondary causes do essentially affect the creation.

¹⁶⁵See page 29.

¹⁶⁶Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra Gentiles, III, 21. Cited by Macquarrie, op. cit., p. 208.

¹⁶⁷Thomas Aquinas, De Potentia, 3, 4. Cited by Frederick Copleston, S. J., Mediaeval Philosophy: A History of Philosophy, Vol. 2, Part 2 (Garden City and New York: Image Books, Doubleday and Company, 1962), p. 84.

Thomas does not hesitate to call secondary factors causes, even though they are not the same sort of causes as the First Cause.

Calvin is not totally consistent on this point. We have already seen how he believes that God governs everything that happens--not just as a co-ordinator but as the one who actually decides what will happen.¹⁶⁸ Referring to human action, he assures us that we "do nothing save at the secret instigation of God" and that nothing comes to pass but those things that he has decreed and causes to happen by his "secret direction."¹⁶⁹ Elsewhere, however, he contends that this divine governing does not deny the activity of other causes. He says:

He who has fixed the boundaries of our life has at the same time entrusted us with the care of it, provided us with the means of preserving it, forwarned us of the dangers to which we are exposed, and supplied ¹⁷⁰cautions and remedies that we may not be overwhelmed unawares.

Aside from the question of how it can be both ways, we want to ask what influence, if any, do causes other than God have on the creation of beings. On balance it would seem, according to the core of Calvin's teaching, that the only answer is none. Calvin, even more emphatically than Augustine, believes that something is and is the way it is because God wills it so.

Barth contends that Calvin did not really know how to apply the idea of domination of God and the dependence of the creature.¹⁷¹ He

¹⁶⁸See page 41.

¹⁶⁹Calvin, Institutes, op.cit., I. XVII. 4.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., I. XVII. 4.

¹⁷¹Barth, Vol. 3, Pt. 3. op. cit., p. 117.

therefore, puts forward the idea of concursum. We are to understand that the creatures are causes, but they are not the same type of cause that God is. God can be called causa because he is the source of all other causae. He is his own cause (causa sui) and the cause of all other causes. Not only does he originate all other causes, but he controls the effects of their causation. Creatures are, therefore, causes of a second, radically inferior, order, for theirs is a derived and dependent causality. We can, however, speak of a divine and human concursum. Since God and the creatures operate on different levels of causality, they can in fact work together without interference. It must be noted, however, that it is God who works with the creature and not the creature with God. The creature can in no way limit God's activity, but God can limit that of the creature.¹⁷² Barth summarizes his idea of concursum in this way:

As causa prima He (God) precedes and accompanies and follows the causae secundae. Therefore, His causare consists and consists only, in the fact that He bends their activity to the execution of his own will which is His will of grace, subordinating their operations to the specific¹⁷³ operation which constitutes the history of the covenant of grace.

Here again is another view which, even though it acknowledges the existence of secondary causes, provides very little scope for their independent operation. These particular comments occur in Barth's discussion of providence, but nowhere in his discussion of creation is any greater scope provided for free, independent, creaturely activity.

¹⁷²Ibid., pp. 98-105.

¹⁷³Ibid., p. 105.

Macquarrie, too, believes that creaturely activity is limited, but his view is quite different from Barth's. Man is entrusted with the responsibility for existence, yet God who has entrusted man with this responsibility has "fixed the boundaries," and man cannot break through these to reverse "the trend of creation which goes from nothing toward fuller being."¹⁷⁴ This is a far more flexible idea than Barth's. There is no indication of "bending" the creature to the creator's will. In commenting on the imago Dei, Macquarrie says it is to be thought of in terms of a "potentiality for being that is given to man with his very being." He continues:

Man is a creature, but as the creature that 'exists,' he has an openness into which he can move outward and upward. . . . At the level of human existence we have passed beyond the levels of beings having fixed essences to existent being, and we have already seen that while man is a creature of God, he has the potentiality for becoming the 'offspring' of God or for being 'adopted' into Sonship and so for somehow participating in God's life. It is when we consider this openness whereby creaturely being may be taken up into holy Being that we get, so to speak, a breathtaking view into creation in all its unimaginable possibilities.¹⁷⁵

The view expressed here is obviously one wherein at least one creature, man, has the responsibility and the capacity for creating himself--not in the sense of giving himself existence but in the sense of determining what the features of that existence will be. Not only man but other creatures too have this capacity, even though they have it in a much more limited way. Macquarrie speaks of there being a

¹⁷⁴Macquarrie, op. cit., p. 225.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., p. 213.

hierarchy of beings. This hierarchy is determined by the capacity of the various creatures to be in the imago dei. He cites and supports Thomas' view that all creatures tend to imitate God. For him this means that all creatures, even hydrogen atoms, are like God in their capacity for "letting-be" or in giving being to other creatures. Since "letting-be" is the essence of the creative act for Macquarrie, then it seems fair to conclude that he sees all creatures being at least to some extent, creative.

A link is seen here between man and the rest of nature. Man, though distinct from nature, is not separate from it. Also implied here is that there is a real risk in creation. With the capacity for letting-be there is the possibility of rebellion rather than cooperation. To speak of risk means freedom--freedom which can either be used creatively or destructively.¹⁷⁶

It is impossible to generalize, then, about the relationship of the creaturely creativity to divine creativity. Those who think along Augustinian lines tend to see less scope for cooperation for those than those whose thinking is influenced by Thomas. The issue appears to be unsettled as to how much freedom a creature has in his creative act. The one point of universal agreement, however, is that God's creative act is unique in that it alone gives being. Whether this be approached essentially or existentially, it properly belongs to God to give the creature being. Whatever else the creature may contribute, he cannot contribute this.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., p. 208.

Creation and Time

We now turn briefly to another issue which has received considerable attention in connection with the doctrine of creation: the question of the relationship of creation to time. Until fairly recent times, the church accepted the account in Genesis 1 and 2 as literal history. Therefore, the belief was that God created the world some six thousand years ago. The question seems to have arisen frequently, "What did God do before he made the world?" Various answers were given. Origin believed that before God made this world, he made others.¹⁷⁷ Augustine, however, had the insight that speaking of a time before the creation would be impossible since time itself is a creature having come into existence when the world was created. One cannot inquire about a time before creation because there simply was none.¹⁷⁸ Time is the measure of change in the created world. God is unchanging and, therefore, not involved in time. This conclusion proved to be highly influential.

Thomas would agree that creation is outside of time since time is an attribute of creation, but he argues that it cannot be proven philosophically that there is a first assignable moment of time nor can it be proven that a creation of a first moment is an impossibility. Philosophy cannot settle this question. The answer can only be attained through revelation, and revelation testifies to the creation of the

¹⁷⁷Origin, De Principio, III. V. 304. Cited by Strahan, op. cit., p. 220.

¹⁷⁸Augustine, City of God, op. cit., XII. 25.

world in time and not from eternity.¹⁷⁹ Thomas saw no problem at all in the notion of a series without a beginning. Copleston comments:

In his (Thomas') eyes the question whether it would be possible for the world to have passed through infinite time does not arise, since there is strictly no passing through an infinite series if there is no first term in the series. Moreover, for St. Thomas a series can be infinite ex parte ante and finite ex parte post, and it can be added to at the end at which it is finite. In general, there is no contradiction between being brought into existence and existing ~~from~~¹⁸⁰ eternity: if God is eternal, God have created from eternity.

Among contemporary thinkers, E. L. Mascall is one who believes that the doctrine of creation is not concerned with a hypothetical act by which God brought the world into existence, but rather with the incessant act by which he preserves the world in its existence. Most people, however, read the creation narratives as description of the beginning of the finite world even though they accept the descriptions as non-literal. Mascall believes that this identification of a world beginning with the doctrine of creation is most likely the result of nineteenth century deism wherein the world was considered so stable and well ordered that it could keep itself going according to the laws of Newtonian physics. There was no need at all in deist systems for anything more than this original moment of creation.¹⁸¹

A first moment of creation receives little or no mention from other contemporary thinkers. There appears to be implicit agreement

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, op. cit., I. 46. 2c.

¹⁸⁰ Copleston, op. cit., p. 86.

¹⁸¹ E. L. Mascall, Christian Theology and Natural Science (Archon Books, 1965), pp. 132-137.

that this is more a scientific question than a philosophical or theological one. Certainly, the existence or non-existence of such a first moment would in no way affect the three affirmations stated above.

CONCLUSION

To draw together what we've been saying, we have found that the Doctrine of Creation is primarily a statement of faith. Its purpose is to express the relationship between God and man as Creator and creature. Ever since the close of the nineteenth century, theology has been forced to admit that this doctrine is making religious and not scientific assertions. Thus, it cannot seek to explain the mechanics of the world process, but rather the status of the world and man vis-a-vis God. Two ideas are the foundation on which the Doctrine of Creation is built--creatio ex nihilo and creatio per verbum.

One intention of creatio ex nihilo is to deny any correlation between God's creative act and man's. Even though both are creators, God and man create in radically different ways. Man is dependent on the things he finds around him. God needs nothing and uses nothing. God's act is absolute origination, while man's is simply transformation of what he is given. But the difference is even greater than this. Since Aquinas, theologians have said that God's creative act was the gift of existence, that he and he alone bestowed being on all creatures. The creature's existence depends completely on God, for it is God's decision whether or not that creature or any other should be. Another intention of creatio ex nihilo is well summarized by Macquarrie when he says that it "draws attention to the fact that any particular being

stands, so to speak, between nothing and Being." It is only the grace of God that brings the creature out of non-being and sustains him from slipping back into non-being.¹⁸²

The equating of creation with the gift of being leads theology away from thinking about God's creativity as being solely originaive to seeing it also as continuing. The creature owes not only his moment of origination to God but every moment of his subsequent existence. God gives existence and he sustains it. This is, however, much more than just keeping the mechanism well wound. As God sustains, he also directs the creature toward its appointed end. Providence is part of God's creative act. The creature is brought from nothingness and kept from nothingness by God's creative power. The original relationship between God and his creature is perpetually maintained.

The closest idea theology has to a "how" explanation of creation is the concept of creatio per verbum. Here God is seen as working through his Word to effect all things, but again this is not a "scientific" explanation of how things come into existence. The ancient Jews thought of God summoning all things into existence. Their idea was that the "word" by which God creates was literally his spoken utterance, but gradually this concept changed. The "Word" took on its own identity within the Godhead. St. John speaks of the Word which created becoming flesh. Irenaeus called the Word and the Spirit God's "hands" which he uses in his creating. By the time of the Trinitarian controversies the Word was understood as the "Logos" which was the pre-existent Son of

¹⁸² Macquarrie, op. cit., p. 198.

God who has been with the Father from the beginning. Christ was seen as the incarnation of this creative Logos. Thus, the same power which created the world is also its Saviour. An intimate, essential, but often minimized relationship between creation and salvation is thereby established.

These two notions formed the base which could support three contentions about creation: God is the source of all existence and all that is is dependent on him; Creation, even though corrupted by sin, is good; and, creation is a free act of God's gracious love. These contentions seem to most theologians to express the truth of the doctrine of creation. They establish a transcendent God who is nonetheless immanently involved in the world at the most fundamental level of giving it its being. Because God is good, what he does in his creating is good and he creates a good cosmos. Reasons differ as to why we might regard this creation as good, but there is agreement among theologians that it is not our evaluation, but God's, which is important. The world is good because God pronounced it good, because he valued it so. This does not deny, though it often seems to minimize, the significance of sin and evil. The world is created each moment good, but somehow in each moment evil can also be found. Evil is perhaps the hardest problem facing any formulation of a doctrine of creation based on a belief in a good God. Finally, God's goodness is the only motive he has for his creating. Nothing else causes him to do it. He creates out of love with the purpose of establishing a loving communion between himself and his creation. He provides the opportunity of the greatest possible happiness of there being something other than himself which can be in union with himself.

Chapter 2

THE PROCESS CONCEPT OF CREATION

The fundamental principle of process thought is the notion of creativity. Alfred North Whitehead ranked it as the ultimate of ultimate notions.¹ In so doing, he left the path followed by previous western philosophy. No one before him had given creativity such precedence. Up until Whitehead, ideas such as form, matter, substance, and being were considered the most fundamental notions. These all share one thing in common. They are categories which describe reality as being basically static. For this reason, Whitehead could not use them to express his vision of reality. Only those categories which give a dynamic description of reality could be considered fundamental. Why? Because what Whitehead saw as being most real was what he called process.

PROCESS AND CREATIVITY

The most complete exposition of Whitehead's thought is found in his Gifford Lectures of 1927-28, which he published under the title Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology. In this book he endeavors "to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in

¹Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper and Brothers, 1960), p. 31.

which every element of our experience can be interpreted."² The basic generalization found here is that the entire cosmos is composed of a non-stop, non-hesitating series of events. As Charles Hartshorne says, "The most concrete mode of reality is not existing substance, thing, or person, but actually occurring event, state, or experience."³ The flow of these events is so rapid and their duration so brief that it is impossible to distinguish one event in a series from another. The situation is like watching a movie where one sees the action in the film as continuous rather than as a sequence of separate frames which is what the movie actually is.⁴ These events, which are generally referred to as "actual entities," are the ultimate things which compose creation. The actual world is, therefore, to be seen as a process--the process of the creation of these events.⁵ Whitehead states this fundamental principle as follows:

How an actual entity becomes constitutes what that actual entity is; so that the two descriptions are not independent. Its 'being' is constituted by its 'becoming.' This is the 'principle of process.'⁶

We are then correct in saying that the process is a creative process, since it is the creation of actual entities.

²Ibid., p. 4.

³Charles Hartshorne, *Natural* A National Theology for Our Time (La Salle: Open Court, 1967), p. 25.

⁴John B. Cobb, Jr., A Christian Natural Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), p. 29.

⁵Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 33.

⁶Ibid., pp. 34-35.

Whitehead placed creativity along with the notions of "many" and "one" in his "category of the ultimate," because these three ideas were seen as the necessary referents to everything that exists. Of the three, creativity was the ultimate principle because it is the way "by which the many which are the universe disjunctively become the one occasion which is the universe conjunctively."⁷ Creativity is, therefore, the essence of the process. It is the fundamental principle because it is manifested in all reality. It is found in everything from the most fleeting electronic impulse to the eternal existence of God. Hartshorne assures us, "There is nothing but creative experience."⁸

This notion of creative experience goes farther than simply stating that all of reality has creative capacity. It means that each instance of reality actually creates. While some distinction must be made between supreme creativity and lesser forms of it, some creativity must be attributed to all actuality. Hartshorne puts the issue quite clearly:

To be is to create. According to this view, when we praise certain individuals as 'creative' we can mean only that what they create is important or extensive, while what others create is trivial or slight. But what they create cannot be zero, so long as the individuals exist.⁹

This quotation hints at a possible reason why creativity has been neglected for being considered an ultimate principle in other

⁷Ibid., p. 31.

⁸Charles Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method (London: SCM Press, 1970), p. 7.

⁹Ibid., p. 1. See also Hartshorne's A Natural Theology for Our Time, op. cit., p. 26.

philosophical systems. This neglect may be due in part to the fact that in ordinary language the word is applied only to the more conspicuous and exceptional modes of creativity. Artists, scientists and other people are called creative when they introduce new ways of thinking or feeling or when they bring into being things that had not previously existed or had not been distinctly anticipated before. Process thought takes this idea and expands it into a basic metaphysical description of reality. The human creativity just mentioned is one form of creativity, but there are also forms for the other animals and, beyond them, forms for what are generally believed to be inanimate objects. Even atoms exist by means of their creative experience.¹⁰

The contention here is not that everything creates. While some things are obviously creative, there are things, such as tables and chairs, sticks and stones, which obviously are not. However, when these non-creative things are broken down into their most singular, concrete components, these components will, in some way or other, manifest creativity. This may be minimal, but nonetheless some creativity will be found. For example, a rock is not creative, but the atoms which make up the molecules of a rock are.¹¹

In discussing creation, process thought first focuses its attention on understanding these basic exemplifications of creativity which are the actual entities.

¹⁰Charles Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), p. 174.

¹¹Ibid.

ACTUAL ENTITIES

The most singular, concrete components of reality are actual entities. They are "the final real things of which the world is made up."¹² Everything that is not an actual entity is either a group of such entities or an abstraction from them. For the sake of clarity, it should be mentioned here that one is not, in the normal course of experience, aware of actual entities. Furthermore, they rarely appear in scientific analysis. Human experience and scientific experimentation are largely concerned with entities that are groupings of actual entities rather than with individual actual entities themselves. Since actual entities endure for only a fraction of a second, they can be detected only by intense introspection or by sophisticated scientific instruments.¹³ Nevertheless, they are regarded as the ultimate units of reality. Therefore, the concept of actual entities needs considerable clarification and careful definition. The ontological question must be asked: What is the nature of the reality of actual entities?

Actual Entities as Energy Events

John Cobb's description of actual entities as "energy events" is a helpful model to use in understanding them.¹⁴ Cobb prefaces his discussion of this model by pointing out that traditional metaphysics has

¹²Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 33.

¹³Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., p. 40.

¹⁴John B. Cobb, Jr., God and the World (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), pp. 69-70.

always wrestled with the problem of whether mind or matter was "the really real." The question being asked was, "Is reality basically mental or physical?"

This is no longer a proper question. Modern physics has made it very difficult to get any clear idea of just what constitutes a physical reality. For example, the seemingly solid, inert objects which are often used as illustrations of physical reality have been found to be made up of sub-atomic particles which are highly active. Very few of the physical properties one attributes to a stone--properties such as endurance through time, passivity, and impenetrability--can be applied to an electron. An electron can best be understood as a succession of events which transmit energy from past events to future ones. "The building blocks of the universe, the things of which everything else is composed, are energy events."¹⁵ Modern physics, therefore, gives a description of physical reality which is not the one usually employed by philosophers.

A similar situation exists as concerns mental reality. Modern psychology has blurred considerably any understanding of what would be a mental reality. The dynamics of psychosomatic relationships have made a clear separation of the mental from the physical impossible. Even "thought" which is generally regarded as exemplifying mentality, has been shown to be intimately related to physical reality. It, too, may be conceptualized as an energy event. "The act of thinking receives energy from past occurrences in the body and transmits that energy appropriately

¹⁵Ibid., p. 70.

modified to subsequent events."¹⁶ The question then is not the relationship of mind to matter, but the relationship of a conscious (mental) energy event to an unconscious (physical) one.

Process thought thus rejects the ontological dualism of mind and matter or of a strictly mental and a strictly physical reality. The two are not different types of reality. Cobb elaborates in this way:

. . . if thought is viewed as the characteristic function of mind and sensory extension as that of the physical, the experience of the physical through the senses is neither clearly mental nor physical. Emotion likewise falls under neither heading. For these and other reasons, ontological dualism is profoundly unsatisfactory.¹⁷

What is crucially important in this discussion is grasping the idea that mind and matter, when understood as energy events, do not belong to completely different order of being. Both are a succession of events transmitting energy from preceding events to following ones. In some instances, such as the case of inorganic matter, the energy transmitted from one event to another may be only very slightly converted. In what can be termed living matter the conversion can, and often is, quite radical. There are, therefore, vast differences between the various types of events. Energy events are highly diverse in character. Electronic events are not like human experiences in any inclusive way, but all energy events do have a basic ontological similarity. Therefore, a fundamental identity can be established between an occasion of human experience and an occasion of electronic experience.¹⁸

¹⁶Ibid., p. 69.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸John B. Cobb, Jr., "The Finality of Christ in a Whiteheadian Perspective," The Finality of Christ, ed. Dow Kirkpatrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 122.

For process thought, the model of actual entities as energy events is broad and flexible enough to include the totality of what other philosophies have classified as mind and matter. There is no reality to which it does not apply. Whitehead insists that the notion of actual entities can be sufficiently extended to include God, as well as the lowliest occasion of experience. There is but one basic genus of reality--actual entities.¹⁹ His introduction to the concept puts it well:

There is no going behind actual entities to find anything more real. They differ among themselves: God is an actual entity, and so is the most trivial puff of existence in far-off empty space. But though there are gradations of importance, and diversities of function, yet in the principles which actuality exemplifies all are on the same level. The final facts are, all alike, actual entities; and these actual entities are drops of experience, complex and interdependent.²⁰

CREATIVE SYNTHESIS

Actual entities are the fundamental facts of creation. Describing them as energy events has stressed their dynamic nature. The principle of process pointed out that an entity's being is constituted by its becoming. We must, therefore, turn our attention to this to see what is involved in the experience that constitutes an actual entity.

Hartshorne calls the experience of an actual entity "creative synthesis." As a summary description, it may be said that creative synthesis is the process of self-creation, whereby each entity fuses together the vast multiplicity of influences bearing in upon it

¹⁹Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 168.

²⁰Ibid., p. 28. The question of whether God is an actual entity or a society of entities is discussed below. See pages 179-182.

producing the one singular experience which is its reality. Each experience is more than just a summation of antecedent events, for by means of the synthesis, the experience has added its own uniqueness to the totality of reality.²¹

Hartshorne's notion of creative synthesis has been appropriated almost totally from Whitehead. Whitehead called this process "prehension." Hartshorne has said that this theory of prehension is "one of the finest contributions ever made to epistemology."²² Most process thinkers, including Hartshorne on occasion, use the term prehension instead of creative synthesis. Hartshorne's terminology seems preferable for the purposes of this paper, since it emphasizes the creative aspect of the experience of actual entities. The two terms will, though, be used interchangeably.

There are four factors determining each creative synthesis:

- (1) the "subject" which is the actual entity performing the synthesis;
- (2) the "data" which are the objects of the synthesis; (3) the "subjective form" which is how the subject decides to synthesize the objects; and (4) God who is both the beginning and the end of the process of creative synthesis.²³

²¹The most compact discussion of this is the first chapter of Hartshorne's Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., pp. 3-19.

²²Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 125.

²³Whitehead did not include God as a special factor determining a prehension. God, in his thinking, is considered as part of the data a subject receives. While this is true, God's role is far more essential than this classification implies, as we shall see. Other process thinkers included in this paper do define a special role for God in each creative synthesis.

THE SUBJECT

The most important factor in creative synthesis is the subject itself. Whitehead says that the experiencing subject is the primary substance of philosophy. As far as he is concerned, "Apart from the experiences of subjects there is nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, bare nothingness."²⁴ The locus of the creative act then is found in the subject's own creative synthesis.

The Reformed Subjectivist Principle

Process thought functions on the basis of the "reformed subjectivist principle." Whitehead enthusiastically endorses Descartes' idea that "those substances which are the subject enjoying conscious experience provide the primary data for philosophy."²⁵ This, he says, is the greatest philosophical insight anyone has had since Plato and Aristotle. For Whitehead, the whole of the universe consists of the elements that are disclosed in the experiences of subjects, and process is the happening of these experiences. Succinctly stated, the reformed subjectivist principle reads: "The subjective experiencing is the primary metaphysical situation which is presented to metaphysics for analysis."²⁶

²⁴Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 254.

²⁵Ibid., p. 241. He does comment, however, "Descartes missed the full sweep of his own discovery, and he and his successors, Locke and Hume, continued to construe the functionings of the subjective enjoyment of experience according to the substance-quality categories." The "reformation" of Descartes' subjectivist principle is in refusing to recognize these categories as fundamental.

²⁶Ibid., p. 243.

A frequently used illustration of the reformed subjectivist approach concerns the greyness of a stone. Substance-quality metaphysics takes the statement "The stone is grey" as its basic abstraction. According to the reformed subjectivist principle, the basic abstraction is "my experience of the stone as grey" from which "the stone is grey" must be regarded as a derivative abstraction. What Whitehead finds basic is what the occasion feels for itself and not, for example, the simple "impression of sensation" as Hume suggested.

Self-Creation

Creative synthesis is literally centered in the subject. It is first and foremost a process of self-creation. Although the idea of self-creation does not exclude the idea of being created by others, the belief that creation is basically the actual entity's creating itself is of first importance in understanding process thought.

Hartshorne says we can find the basis for such a view in our own experiences. Each of us, each moment of our lives, accomplishes the remarkable creative act of having his own experience of that moment. To argue against this that one does not create his own experience because there are many causes entering that experience from the outside, only proves that these causes alone cannot fully explain the experience. Out of many causes, only one experience arises. The many causal factors must be integrated into the one experience, not just an experience but the one which does in fact take place. Such integration cannot be explained except by the unity which the experiencing subject itself imposes on the various causes. Hartshorne elaborates in this manner:

A person experiences, at a given moment, many things at once, objects perceived, past experiences remembered. That he perceives certain objects and remembers certain things, we can more or less explain; the objects are there, the experiences are recent and connected by associations with objects, and so on. But an experience is not fully described in its total unitary quality merely by specifying what it perceives and remembers. There is the question of how, with just what accent, in just what perspective of relative vividness and emotional colouring, the perceiving and remembering are done. And no matter how we deduce requirements for these aspects from the causes, we have still omitted the unity of all the factors and aspects. There is the togetherness of them all, in a unity of feeling which gives each perception and each memory its unique place and value in this experience, such as it could have in no other.²⁷

In this final unity of the multiplicity of factors entering any experience the meaning of self-creation is found. It is in the entity's freedom to make the final decision of how it will synthesize the data it has received.

Whitehead enjoys repeating the fact that entities are causa sui. It is a mistake to think of them as being the result of external factors. The final determination in any synthesis is the subject's own self-determination. The entity itself is responsible for the results of its own synthesis.²⁸

THE DATA

The entity itself is the subject of its synthesis; other entities are objects. The entities that are included by another entity in its synthesis form the data of its synthesis. "All creation is self-creation

²⁷Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 2.

²⁸Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., pp. 135, 339.

which becomes an element in the self-creation of other subjects."²⁹ Even though an entity is basically self-caused, it is not entirely so. The data are also causes for they are the raw material which are used in the synthesis. The entity is not capable of creating its own data. These must be given it for the simple reason that there cannot be a synthesis unless there is already something to be synthesized.³⁰ Each entity arises out of its "actual world"--that is the nexus of all other entities that have previously had their synthesis and are available for the present one to use in its synthesis.³¹

Process thinkers point out that each entity has a heritage. This heritage is made up of those other actual entities to which the entity synthesizing is spacially and temporally related. Each entity as the subject of its own synthesis receives its predecessors as objects. It will in turn become an object for subsequent events. Hartshorne outlines it in this manner:

Let us take a given act of synthesis, S, following upon other preceeding acts, A, B, In the act C, A and B are not created for they had already been created previously. Hence, in this act A and B are not created, do not become; rather, they enjoy the status of having become. But in the becoming of C as successor to B, this relationship to (and including) B does become. Succession . . . is essentially cumulative. First B without reference to C, then C as successor of B The products of creation cannot be until they are created, but having been created they are bound henceforth to be.³²

²⁹Charles Hartshorne. "The God of Religion and the God of Philosophy," Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures, Vol. II, 1967-68, (London: MacMillan, 1969), p. 166.

³⁰Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 126.

³¹Ibid., p. 30.

³²Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 15.

Two things need to be noted in this analysis. First, each datum has been the subject of its own synthesis and subsequently has become an object to be used in other synthesis. It cannot be a subject and an object at the same time. An entity's subjectivity always precedes its objectivity. Secondly, since they have already had their subjectivity, data are not changed by their inclusion in the synthesis. They remain what they previously were. Temporally prior entities do not depend on their successors for their reality. Their reality has already been achieved in their own synthesis. This means that the subject-object relationship is external or non-constitutive for the data being used in the synthesis. However, it is internal and constitutive for the subject synthesizing. The subject could not become what it does become without synthesizing just that data it does in fact synthesize.³³

Causal Efficacy

Because they are constitutive of the entity, the data of a synthesis are said to have "causal efficacy" and are considered to be the efficient causes of a synthesis. They provide the reasons why new entities have the characteristics they do in fact have. Whitehead's ontological principle puts the issue quite clearly. "Actual entities are the only reasons; so that to search for a reason is to search for one or more actual entities."³⁴ In the sense that previous actual entities are the data needed for an entity's synthesis, they can be said to be creators of that entity.

³³Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 125-26.

³⁴Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 36.

The causal efficacy an entity will have for subsequent entities will depend on how it constituted itself in its own moment of creation. Whitehead points out that to be is to become a potential for every subsequent becoming. Each entity has in its own concrescence fixed itself and formed its own destiny for becoming part of another synthesis.³⁵ For example, Plato has enormously influenced Western philosophy, and even though he has been dead for over two thousand years, continues to influence it now. The influence he exerts is in what he said and did when he was alive. Even though interpretations of him have changed, Plato remains Plato. It is as men read Plato, encounter his ideas, and deal with them in their own thinking that Plato exerts his influence. All causal efficacy is of this nature. Once an entity is an object, it can be a cause of other entities.³⁶

The fundamental difference, then, between a subject and an object is that the subject is present, the object past. The objects a subject experiences are nothing more than past subjects. Causal efficacy is always efficacy of the past. Causes, therefore, are always objects, and effects are always subjects. Cobb does caution, though:

³⁵Ibid., p. 33.

³⁶Charles Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1942), p. 16. Hartshorne illustrates this point with particular reference to the relationship of Plato and Leibniz. Leibniz was influenced by Plato but Plato did not influence him. This seeming contradiction is resolved when one understands that it was only as Leibniz was aware of Plato, that Plato could influence him. Plato did not consciously decide to influence Leibniz. This would have been impossible since Plato lived several centuries before Leibniz. Furthermore, Plato did not determine what influence he would have on Leibniz. Leibniz himself made this determination by incorporating much of Plato's thought into his own. What Plato himself determined was the influence he could have by having precisely those thoughts that he did have.

The correctness of the epistemological analysis of experience according to the subject-object scheme must not be allowed to lead to an ontological view of objects as different in kind from subjects in any way other than the difference between past and present.³⁷

Perishing and Immortality

When an entity is experiencing its own synthesis, it is a subject, but when that synthesis is complete and the subject obtains satisfaction, it ceases to be a subject and becomes an object. As a subject it "perishes" but as an object it attains "immortality."

The word "perish" is used in a highly technical sense by process thinkers. They do not use it to mean being annihilated or even to be changed or diminished. When a subject becomes an object it does not become nothing but rather assumes another mode of being. Hartshorne explains that, "'Perishing' is the realizing of the past in the present as immortal actuality."³⁸ To perish, therefore, means to cease being a subject and, thereby, become objectifiable by other entities.

Hartshorne is not happy with the use of the term "perishing" to describe the process of objectification. "I could never see in the 'perishing' of actual entities anything more than a misleading metaphore which, taken literally, contradicts the dictum, 'entities become but do not change.'"³⁹ He continues by saying that any entity becomes during (from an extended point of view) a finite time and is succeeded by other

³⁷Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., p. 44.

³⁸Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 127.

³⁹Ibid., p. 2.

actualities which objectify it along with their other predecessors, the objectifications being more or less abstract or deficient. The term perishing suggests that the entity is something less as an object than it was as a subject. This is not true. What is true is that an object is rarely fully objectified by a subject in its synthesis. Philosophers who use Plato do not simply repeat his thoughts or reproduce them completely. These thoughts, rather, are used as the foundation or the springboard for their own thinking.

It is through objectification that an entity attains immortality. It is immortal in the sense that it can become part of another entity through that entity's own synthesis. While its personal life concludes with the satisfaction it attains in its own synthesis, it still has a public life ahead as it is included in the larger matrix of other actual entities. Whitehead says that following its life as a subject, an actual entity passes into "its objective immortality as a new objective condition added to the riches of definiteness attainable, the 'real potentiality' of the universe."⁴⁰ Objective immortality then insures that there is a future for any entity beyond itself in the fashioning of other entities.⁴¹

⁴⁰Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 340.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 89, 192. It is worthwhile noting that an entity does not experience its immortality. No longer being a subject this would be impossible. It is other subjects who experience the immortality of an object. In process thinking there is no subjective immortality.

THE TWO ASPECTS OF SYNTHESIS

Subjects include objects in their own synthesis in two ways. There is the concrete aspect of synthesis and the conceptual aspect. Whitehead calls these the physical and mental poles of prehension.⁴²

The Concrete Aspect of Synthesis

The concrete aspect of synthesis is the inclusion of one actual entity (a datum) by another (the subject) in its process of self creation. When a datum is synthesized physically, it undergoes a literal transfer. By what is called "re-enaction," "reproduction," or "conformation" the concrete components of one entity become part of another distinct entity. This physical aspect of the synthesis is said to have a "vector quality" in the sense that it takes "what is there and transfers it to what is here."⁴³ For example, the entities composing the red rubber ball which

⁴² Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., pp. 49, 165, 375ff. Whitehead frequently talks as though there were two distinct types of prehensions--physical and mental. Often he seems to be implying that one can take place without the other. That is, that there could be a strictly physical prehension and a strictly mental one. This is carelessness on his part. The analysis consistent with his overall view is the one set out here. There is the single prehension which has two aspects. Whitehead gives an elaborate discussion of the various "phases" of a prehension indicates the inseparability of mental and physical prehensions. He does not, unfortunately, say that they are in fact two sides of the one coin. Though he deplores the "disastrous separation of mind and body" which he finds characteristic of philosophical systems derived from Descartes, he does not seem aware that his frequent references of the mental prehensions and physical prehensions leaves him open to the same criticism.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 133. A. H. Johnson comments that in physics vectors are quantities that have direction (i.e. force and velocity) as well as magnitude. In biology vectors are the carriers of micro-organisms. Process thought can appropriately use the term vector with both these connotations in mind. A. H. Johnson, Whitehead's Theory of Reality (Boston: Beacon Hill, 1952), p. 40.

existed a moment ago are reproduced in the red rubber ball which exists now. These entities will then be reproduced in the red rubber ball which will exist an instant from now. If they are not reproduced, there will be no red rubber ball.

Data are not reproduced completely or re-enacted exactly in any synthesis. No new synthesis is merely a reproduction of a previous one. An object furnishes itself as datum for a subject, but, as we saw earlier, the subject will synthesize that datum in its own way. The subject receives all its data in tact, but in the synthesis the data undergo change. In some instances, such as the ball mentioned above, the change from one instance of synthesis to the next is quite minimal. If the environment of the ball is stable, then it would be hard to detect change. But no environment is completely stable. New data is always entering a sequence of syntheses, and in each instance of synthesis the data is being transformed by the subject into a novel experience.⁴⁴

An important point to be noted here is that the link between object and subject is to be found in the re-enactment of the object by the subject and not in a mutual exemplification of an abstract factor. For example, the endurance of the emotion anger from one moment to the next is part of the concrete aspect of synthesis. When this anger appears in two successive events, it is not the abstraction anger which connects the one event to the other, it is the actual concrete

⁴⁴Johnson, op. cit., p. 29.

exemplification of anger which has been synthesized. The specific anger itself endures from one synthesis to the next. A characteristic is, therefore, retained from one synthesis to the next through the concrete aspect of synthesis.

The Conceptual Aspect of Synthesis

In addition to the specific, concrete factors which data contribute to a synthesis, there are also ideas and abstractions which constitute the conceptual aspect. In each synthesis a subject prehends not only the concrete aspects of the data but also the conceptual or abstract aspects which are exemplified in the definiteness of concrete aspects. Though given to the subject by the data, these concepts are independent of any particular actualization.

Cobb explains this relationship by way of example. He discusses his seeing a green tie and says:

According to physics and physiology, we know that a train of light coming from the molecules in the tie strikes our eye and activates certain cells there which in turn relay this impact to the optical lobe. It is only after all this has occurred that we experience the green patch somehow projected back onto roughly the region of space where those molecules are located.⁴⁵

This is the physical aspect of synthesis. Literally thousands of successive events convey the image that was seen. Somehow, though, it was a specific, recognizable image that was seen. The light waves, nerve impulses, etc., have been transmuted into the concepts of greenness and tie-ness. These abstractions are then projected back

⁴⁵Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., p. 30.

onto the image, and what is seen is identified as a green tie and not, say, a white cloud. The process of transforming the data received into the notion of a green tie is a mental operation. Cobb's ability to apply greenness and tie-ness to this object is due to the conceptual aspect of the final synthesis in the sequence of events which compose his seeing the tie. Through the conceptual aspect of the presentation, data are received in an organized, meaningful way.

Whitehead believes that what is being prehended in the conceptual aspect of synthesis are eternal objects.⁴⁶ These eternal objects are a very important aspect of his thought. He defines them as "any entity whose conceptual recognition does not involve a necessary reference to any definite actual entities of the temporal world."⁴⁷ What Whitehead has in mind are colors, forms, qualities of feeling, relationship between entities, geometric patterns, and arithmetic relations. No specific concrete referent is required for these. One can conceive of triangularity without thinking of any particular triangle.

Although he calls them entities, eternal objects are not the same as actual entities. They can be distinguished from actual entities not only by their abstract nature but also by the fact that they are indifferent to actualization. They can be actualized repeatedly without being modified. They remain eternally what they are.⁴⁸ There has

⁴⁶Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 379.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 70.

⁴⁸Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., p. 158.

always been the greenness of the green tie which Cobb saw, This greenness exists independent of whether or not it appears in a tie, in grass, or in skin color of a visitor from outer space.

Eternal objects, therefore, transcend actual entities. They are not, however, actual until they have been actualized by an actual entity. Before this, they exist only as pure possibilities for realization and they form, therefore, the realm of pure potentiality.

When Whitehead speaks about eternal objects, he has in mind Plato's eternal forms.⁴⁹ The two are not identical, however, and we should note the difference between them. Whitehead's eternal objects are said to "ingress" in actual entities; Plato maintains that actual entities "participate" in the eternal forms. Eternal objects are transcendent in the sense that they can ingress into a multiplicity of actual entities but they have only this role of ingression. They are no more than possibilities for actual entities. Plato's forms have an ideal state in which the entities participate deficiently. They do have a life other than that of being actualized, and their actualization is little more than a reminder of their eternal, ideal state.⁵⁰

Not all process thinkers find it necessary to describe the conceptual aspect of synthesis in terms of prehending eternal objects.⁵¹

⁴⁹Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

⁵⁰Edward Pols, Whitehead's Metaphysics: A Critical Examination of Process and Reality (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967).

⁵¹For example, see Evert W. Hall, "Of What Use are Whitehead's Eternal Objects," Journal of Philosophy, XXV, January 16, 1930. Reprinted in Alfred North Whitehead: Essays on His Philosophy, George L. Kline, ed.

While Cobb contends, "There can be little doubt that there are eternal objects,"⁵² Hartshorne says, "An obscure, if not definitely erroneous feature of Whitehead's view is his notion of eternal objects."⁵³

Hartshorne sees no need to posit the existence of a multitude of "forms" for feelings and sensations. Such, he contends, is certainly not essential to the Whiteheadian understanding of creation. There is no reason, for example, why there needs to be an absolute, independent abstraction "red" for the redness of the red rubber ball. Characteristics can have a certain degree of universality without possessing it absolutely or eternally. He says:

To use the current term, "essences" may perfectly well emerge in the universe not merely in the world of actuality but in the total universe of actuality and possibility. It is true that, before an essence emerges, there must be a possibility of which its appearance is the actualization; but the question is whether such a possibility need be as definite as the quality which actualizes it. The objection to supposing this is that the process of actualization is thereby reduced to a mere shuffling . . . of primordial qualitative factors. In short, creation in the proper sense is denied.⁵⁴

Hartshorne's contention is that genuine creativity does not concern itself with actualizing "images" that are already there but rather with bringing into being "new images" that are additions to those which already are. Hartshorne insists that the distinction between the possible and actual is between "the relatively indefinite and relatively definite and between the determinable and the determinate." Therefore,

⁵²Cobb, A Christian Natural Philosophy, op. cit., p. 159.

⁵³Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 32.

⁵⁴Ibid.

only the most general determinables or categories need to be regarded as eternal. He says:

I see no good ground at all for supposing that, besides numbers or similarly abstract entities, including metaphysical categories, every quality of sensation or feeling that occurs in experience must have its eternal duplicate. Feeling as such, quality as such, yes, but not red or sweet as determinate qualities identical with those we enjoy in experience. Feeling is a determinable of infinite range, not a vast sum of determinates.⁵⁵

These objections to the idea of eternal objects can be summarized by saying that Hartshorne feels (1) they are unnecessary and (2) they detract from a notion of creation because they are not the result of the creative process. He says:

"The notion that creation consists in the mere parceling out of already completed value is exactly what philosophers somewhat lacking in religious vision, might be expected to have. It is a denial of any intelligible creativity, divine or creatural. To be creative is to add positive determinations to reality, to enrich the totality of things by new values."⁵⁶

This issue does not need to be resolved here and now. Both Cobb and Hartshorne do agree that as each successive actual entity synthesizes a predecessor, it does so both conceptually and concretely. The issue of eternal objects will be taken up again when "the eternal aspect of deity," which Hartshorne considers to be the only eternal object, is discussed.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 65-66. Elsewhere he comments "There is the possibility, in its pure or eternal form it is, as Peirce insists and Whitehead seems at times to forget, essentially continuous. Hence, it is misleading to talk of 'eternal objects' as though this were a definite plurality. It is a continuous matrix out of which all plurality is created." "Comment by Professor Charles Hartshorne" in Eugene M. Peters, The Creative Advance (St. Louis, The Bethany Press, 1966), p. 139.

⁵⁶Hartshorne, Anselm's Discovery, op. cit., p. 59.

⁵⁷Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, p. 66.

DIPOLARITY

Actual entities can synthesize both concretely and conceptually because they are "dipolar." Each entity can be described as having a mental and physical pole. The physical pole of an entity refers to its capacity to receive data concretely and to synthesize the concrete aspect of this data into its own subjectivity. The mental pole expresses the entity's ability to entertain abstractions which are derived from the data and also to imagine other abstractions which are not exemplified in the data.

Through the physical pole, an entity feels itself related to and derived from its actual past. A subject prehends physically only its immediate predecessors. The physical pole cannot, so to speak, step back in time and include the concrete aspects of objects which are not contiguous to it in time and space. Physically, an entity does not experience those things which happened, say, an hour ago. It physically prehends only those things which have happened the instant before the present synthesis. This does not suggest that no physical experience of the more distant past is possible. An entity can experience what was experienced an hour ago, if that experience has been continuously passed on through the sequence of syntheses which took place during this time. Physically an entity is locked into a time sequence and can synthesize only its immediate past. Its distant past is experienced only as it has been re-enacted by all previous entities in the time sequence.

The mental pole is not so restricted. It does not depend on contiguity. While in the initial phase of a prehension, it receives only those abstractions which are derived from the data itself and reproduces

them, in the subsequent phase of the synthesis it can reach outside the immediate tradition bringing into the synthesis concepts that had been exemplified by data not physically included in this synthesis.⁵⁸ The most important illustration of this is memory. Something happens in this moment which triggers our recalling a previous experience. While we do not physically participate in that experience again, we do mentally remember what it was like, sometimes with great vividness.

Because of the mental pole, all the conceptual aspects of a synthesis do not have to be present in the data that is being prehended. It can include conceptually any part of its relevant past. When such inclusion takes place, a novel situation arises in place of the mere reproduction of the previous one.

It is important to note here that "no actual entity is devoid of either pole; though their relative importance differs in different actual entities."⁵⁹ What is being said here is that some synthesis may be dominated by the actual entity's physical pole and some by its mental pole, but in no synthesis will either pole be completely lacking. There is an element of mind and matter in all reality. There is no such thing as a purely mental reality nor a purely physical one, as we shall see later.

This dipolar nature of an actual entity accounts for, among other things, the preservation and change, the limitation and freedom within the cosmos.

⁵⁸Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., pp. 380-381.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 366.

What must be underlined before moving on, is that the mental and physical poles of an entity are inseparable. They compose the dual nature of the creative urge. There is not, as in classical dualism, two independent realms of reality, or even two interdependent realms. There is but the one, "two-sided" reality. When we look at the one side of the reality, we must always be aware that we are only seeing part of what must be taken into consideration. This point cannot be over-emphasized. Lowe states:

Physical inheritance from the environment and novel 'mental' reaction to it, are both, in principle, ascribed to every occasion It makes no difference that the 'mentality' involved in inorganic occasions is slight in proportion as spontaneity is negligible.⁶⁰

Even though he says the two poles of an actual entity are indissolvable, Whitehead is not as clear on this point as he could have been.⁶¹ Hartshorne, however, is emphatic that there is a distinction between process "duality" and classical "dualism." Indeed, the process intention is that these contrasts be so interlocked that all classical dualisms expressing an exclusiveness of substances based on mutual independence, be overcome. Hartshorne says:

Every actual entity . . . is dipolar and that in several ways. Nothing concrete or actual is merely one or merely many, or mere cause which is in no effect, or a completeness which is in no way incomplete or subject to addition, or an activity which is in no way passive, or the mere contrary of these.⁶²

⁶⁰Victor Lowe, Understanding Whitehead (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1966), p. 242.

⁶¹Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 366.

⁶²Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 68.

Drawing this together, we find that all data is synthesized concretely and conceptually because each subject has both a physical and a mental aspect to its nature. The predominance of these poles differs from one entity to the next, but nonetheless, each entity has both physical and mental aspect, and, therefore, data are synthesized concretely and conceptually.

SUBJECTIVE FORM

We have been speaking of the creative process in terms of an actual entity synthesizing the data it receives from previous actual entities and, thereby, creating itself. The creative synthesis is the single subjective experience of many objects. We have also mentioned that the creative aspect of synthesis arises from the fact that the data do not determine how they will be synthesized. This is a decision that is made by the entity itself. Creative synthesis takes place when an entity decides what it will do with what it has been given.⁶³ An entity's synthesis consists in "mating" the data with ways of feeling provocative of a private synthesis. These subjective ways of feeling . . . clothe the dry bones with the flesh of a real being, emotional and purposive."⁶⁴ The way in which data are synthesized is called the "subject form," and the subjective form is, therefore, the third factor influencing the creative synthesis.

⁶³Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 117.

⁶⁴Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 131.

Feelings

Basically, there are two decisions an actual entity can make about the data it encounters. First, it can decide either to include or to exclude a particular datum. Secondly, if it decides to include a datum, it must further determine just how that datum will be included.

When the decision is made to include a datum, that datum will be experienced positively, meaning that it will be used by the entity as a constituent in its own concrescence. This positive experiencing of a datum is called "feeling." A datum is felt when it is included in the synthesis. Feelings are, therefore, determinative of the synthesis, because they determine whether or not an object will be permitted to influence the subject.⁶⁵

If the decision is made to exclude a datum, that datum is rejected. It is recognized as being available, but it is not considered suitable by the subject for inclusion in the synthesis and therefore, does not become part of the synthesis. It is inoperative and maintains an external relationship to the entity synthesizing. This rejection of a datum is important because it determines what the entity will not become. An actual entity is what it is, not only because of what it decides to include in its synthesis but also because of what it leaves out. For example, Whitehead points out that one reason why North America is what she is today is that she was never completely dominated by Spain.⁶⁶ He also explains:

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 337.

⁶⁶Alfred North Whitehead, Modes of Thought (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1938), p. 122.

A feeling bears on itself the scars of its birth; it recollects as a subjective emotion, its struggle for existence; it retains the impress of what it might have been, but is not. It is for this reason that what an actual entity has avoided as a datum for feeling, may yet be an important part of its equipment. The actual cannot be reduced to mere matter of fact in divorce from the potential.⁶⁷

When a datum is prehended negatively, it is inoperable in the synthesis, but the subjective form of its exclusion is part of the synthesis.

The fact that an object is included in a synthesis, does not tell the whole story. Of equal importance is how that object is included. No entity is neutral toward the data it experiences.⁶⁸ This attitude which determines how the synthesis will happen, is the "subjective form" of the synthesis. The subjective form is the affective tone with which a subject experiences an object. Whitehead says there are many species of subjective forms and as examples lists emotions, valuations, purposes, adversions, aversions, and consciousness.⁶⁹

On the conceptual side of synthesis, valuation is always part of the subjective form. This or that datum is felt to be either important, trivial, irrelevant or not wanted. When more than one possibility is presented, these are evaluated by the subject in accordance with their importance to the subject. Each will be approved or disapproved in varying degrees.

⁶⁷Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 346.

⁶⁸David Griffin says, "When I prehend my mother-in-law, the content of what I prehend is the objective datum (my mother-in-law as she appears to me), and this datum is felt with some emotion." David R. Griffin, A Process Christology, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973), p. 168.

⁶⁹Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 35.

Subjective Aim

The subjective form of each synthesis is the result of the fact that each entity has a "subjective aim." The subjective aim is the entity's purpose in self-creation--the goal it will seek for itself.⁷⁰ Whitehead called the subjective aim a "lure for feeling" meaning that it is this which guides an entity toward its final satisfaction. This aim is always in accord with what is possible for the entity, taking into consideration not only the entity's own satisfaction, but also the contribution it will make to the societies of which it is a part.⁷¹

The relationship between the subjective aim and the subjective form that is the subjective aim is the cause of the subjective form. Data will be experienced in a particular way because this will or will not satisfy the subjective aim. For example, if I am in a hurry to get to my office and I encounter a red light, the subjective form of this encounter will be annoyance since it thwarts my aim of arriving at work quickly.

The subjective aim is the key to an entity's self-creation because it is in accordance with this aim that it will synthesize the data. It is each occasion's aim that makes it a distinct individual. Peter Bertocci discusses this in terms of "willing" and says:

⁷⁰Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., pp. 37, 130.

⁷¹Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., pp. 95-96.

'Willing' is at least that activity of personal effort, which far from producing the situation with which it is confronted at any decision point, does create a situation that would not have ensued had the decision not been made to hold firm to certain activity-contents as opposed to others.⁷²

Bertocci further feels that these factors would "follow the path of least resistance" if they were not directed elsewhere. The subjective aim provides this direction.

The idea of a subjective aim carries with it several closely related meanings. In normal conversation we speak of a man having an aim in life. This can mean that he has some very general goal or purpose that he hopes to attain, for example prosperity or pleasure. It could also mean, however, that he has some very definite objective that he wants to achieve such as being President of the United States. Further, it can refer to the actual things that this man does to achieve his aim. Usually all three meanings are so closely related that it is not important to differentiate between them. The subjective aim likewise carries all three connotations. It may be at something general and/or specific. It may refer also, to the means of achieving this goal. This act of aiming is perhaps the most precise meaning of the subjective aim as it relates to the subjective form of a synthesis.⁷³

⁷²Peter Bertocci, "Free Will, the Creativity of God, and Order," in Current Philosophical Issues: Essays in Honor of C. J. Ducasse, Frederick C. Dommeyer, ed. (Springfield, Illinois: C. C. Thomas, 1966), p. 221.

⁷³Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., p. 152.

Initial Aim

Whitehead points out that there are two phases to the subjective aim. The first of these is what he calls the "initial aim." This aim is given to the entity with the data it receives at the beginning of its synthesis.⁷⁴ This aim points the entity toward an ideal possibility for it but it does so in terms of graduations of possible realizations. The entity is not forced, however, to accept and actualize what is presented it in the initial aim. During the subsequent phase of the synthesis, the actual entity is free to modify or adapt the initial aim. Thus, the initial aim which is determined for the entity is changed by the entity into the subjective aim, which governs the synthesis. As Cobb says, "this self-determination of its own aim is the final locus of freedom within the limits of causal force as determined by the settled past and the principle of order inherent in its initial aim"⁷⁵

Although an entity may depart from the initial aim in forming its own subjective aim, the initial aim is never completely abandoned because it is the basis for the synthesis. The initial aim has determined just what data will constitute the actual world out of which the new entity arises. The determination has, therefore, been made as to what entities this entity can synthesize. The entity occupies a quite precise location in the space-time continuum over which it has no control. It does not decide which events will be contiguous to it. We can,

⁷⁴Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 372.

⁷⁵Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., p. 96.

therefore, speak of each entity emerging from a settled past. It does not, however, have a settled future. Given the perspective of what has already been settled for it, the entity is free to do what it wills to do.⁷⁶

Subjective Aim and Final Cause

In process thinking, the subjective aim is to be regarded as the final cause of the creative synthesis. Just as the data used in a synthesis served as its efficient causes, so the subjective aim serves as the final cause. Because of this, we are justified in saying that each synthesis is teleological. There is a suggested goal for each creative moment.

In a strictly Whiteheadian interpretation of the subjective aim--an interpretation with which Hartshorne would disagree--each subjective aim is an eternal object that an entity uses as the basis of its concrescence. The subjective aim is, therefore, presented to the entity along with the rest of the data it initially receives. In this way, novelty is introduced into the synthesis. The subjective aim does not, however, have to remain the same; it can be modified. Even though it may change, the change is not so radical that no substantial unity with it remains throughout the synthesis.

Even though Hartshorne would agree that the subjective aim is received in the first instant of the synthesis, he does not feel that the aim had to exist eternally before that synthesis took place. It could have arisen in response to the particular data given to the entity in its

⁷⁶Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., pp. 195, 434.

initial moment of synthesis. This is, of course, part of his objection to the concept of eternal objects. As we mentioned earlier, Hartshorne prefers to think of specific characteristics (i.e. Whitehead's eternal objects) as "created rather than selected" out of the primordial potentiality. This has, Hartshorne feels, the advantage of being more consistent with the notion of all things being creative and created as well as avoiding a rigid division of all things into sheer individuals and sheer universals.⁷⁷

Cobb's approach differs from both Whitehead's and Hartshorne's. He sees the initial aim as a "propositional feeling." Propositions in process thought have as their subjects the actual entity undergoing synthesis and as their predicates an eternal object or a group of eternal objects. The proposition consists in the possibility of the predicate being assigned in a particular way to the subject. Therefore, a proposition serves as the initial guide for an entity's synthesis since the entity's synthesis begins as it feels this particular possibility for its becoming. Cobb says that the initial aim "is the feeling of a proposition of which the novel occasion is the logical subject and the appropriate eternal object is the predicate." He further says that, "the subjective form of the propositional feeling is appetite, that is, the desire for its realization"⁷⁸

This approach is helpful because it clarifies just what is involved in the initial aim. The aim includes the actual entity not as

⁷⁷Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 59.

⁷⁸Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., p. 156.

an abstract possibility but as a very specific entity. It has a definite goal present to it in the predicate. Robert Neville, citing Cobb's view, says that seeing the initial aim as a proposition and not as an object means we can understand it as being a norm. "Universals," he says, "are not things, desiccated shapes imagining or being imagined in concrete particulars; rather, they are norms undeterminate in themselves but determinate as measures of how the particular components of a complexity ought to go together."⁷⁹

Hartshorne's question is still a valid one, however. Do the eternal objects need to exist prior to the occasion itself or can the predicate of the proposition not be created for the particular subject as it arises? Cobb's clarification does not demand the retention of the concept of eternal objects.

Satisfaction

The subjective aim of an entity is said to direct it toward a particular "satisfaction" which is the fulfillment of that entity's subjective aim.⁸⁰ The entity has attained what it willed to attain and its creative urge is exhausted. Satisfaction indicates that the final unity of data and subjective form has taken place, and the entity is said to "enjoy" this momentary completion of its synthesis. In this final unity of feeling, it has achieved its full measure of individuality. "The occasion arises from relevant objects, and perishes into the status

⁷⁹Robert Neville, "Experience and Philosophy: A Review of Hartshorne's Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method," Process Studies II/1, Spring 1972, p. 58.

⁸⁰Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., pp. 195, 434.

of an object for other occasions. But it enjoys its decisive moment of absolute self-attainment as emotional unity."⁸¹

Satisfaction, then, marks the entity's transition from subject to object. In achieving satisfaction an entity thrusts itself into the future. "The occasion arises as an effect facing its past and ends up as a cause facing its future."⁸² Having attained satisfaction an entity is now available for being a datum for other entities. Each entity in its satisfaction has constituted itself not only in terms of its own enjoyment, but also in terms of being included in future syntheses. As a subject achieves satisfaction and obtains objective immortality, a new object is added to the richness of the cosmos, and it has, thereby, contributed to the "real potentiality" of the universe.⁸³

Superjective Nature

Whitehead calls that aspect of an entity's satisfaction which faces toward the future, its "superjective nature." He says:

An entity is to be conceived both as a subject presiding over its own immediacy of becoming and as a superject which is the atomic creature exercising its function of objective immortality. It has become a 'being,' and it belongs to the nature of every 'being' that it is a potential for every 'becoming.'"⁸⁴

Whitehead is, therefore, justified in calling the superjective nature the "pragmatic value" of an entity's personal satisfaction.⁸⁵

⁸¹Alfred North Whitehead, Adventure of Ideas (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1933), p. 227.

⁸²Ibid., p. 248.

⁸³Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 341.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 71.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 134.

Whitehead further insists that one must never lose sight of the fact that an entity is both "subject-superject."⁸⁶ Johnson notes that Whitehead is slightly self-contradictory here in describing the superjective nature as something that is congruent with an entity's subjectivity while also saying it emerges only when the subject has finished its career.⁸⁷ Whitehead would probably have been more accurate to have said that an entity was subject-object-superject rather than just subject-superject, for the superjective nature can be described as the "publicity of the entity's private satisfaction which constitutes its objectivity."⁸⁸ It is both the feeler and the feeling. "The immediate occasion is both an agent responsible for the specific immanence that arises and the product of the process."⁸⁹

The superjective nature of an entity expresses its anxiousness to be included in future creative syntheses. Since its immortality consists not in being available for other syntheses but in actually being included in them, it contains within its own satisfaction an orientation toward being included in subsequent syntheses. In other words, the aim of an entity is not only at the maximum intensity of feeling for itself in the present but also towards its being part of the future.⁹⁰ The

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 47.

⁸⁷Johnson, Whitehead's Theory of Reality, op. cit., p. 42

⁸⁸Lowe, Understanding Whitehead, op. cit., p. 355.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 41.

subjective aim, which dominates the synthesis points the entity toward its final superjective status. We can then see that the satisfaction toward which an entity is pointed is not only toward what it can achieve for itself in the present, but also toward what it can contribute toward others in the future. Whitehead comments:

Any actual entity considered in reference to the publicity of things is a 'superject,' namely, it arises from the publicity which it finds, and it adds itself to the publicity which it transmits. It is a moment of passage from decided public facts to novel public fact.⁹¹

Whitehead's discussion of the superjective nature is not nearly as well worked out as his discussions of the primordial and consequent natures are. As the above discussion indicates, Whitehead does see the need to locate somewhere in his system the push forward which keeps the system going. The superjective natures of entities are those aspects of the system which do this. Were there not this appetite for the future, it would be difficult to see how the creativity of the universe perpetuates itself. More will be said on this later.

Freedom and Limitation

Having looked at actual entities in terms of the data they receive for synthesis and the subjective form which determines the nature of the synthesis, we can draw together what we have been saying by looking at the relationship between freedom and limitation. Process thought affirms the reality of both, since both are a part of each synthesis.

Like the mental and physical aspects of a synthesis, freedom and limitation should never be thought of separately, for the two

⁹¹Ibid., p. 443.

together make up causation. As we noted, freedom is found in the subjective form of a prehension, which is the final cause of that prehension, and limitation is found in the data of the prehension which is its efficient cause. Creativity is not free in the sense of being completely voluntary and without impediment, but rather it is free in the sense of determining the otherwise indeterminate, or of adding to the antecedent or presupposed definiteness of reality.⁹² When freedom is affirmed, it is understood that freedom has limits. Freedom makes sense only within the context of limitation. These limitations are the actual world of each entity at the moment of its becoming. Each occasion must occur in its own world and take account of that world. "Casual efficacy" is a limiting factor. The determination lies here in the fact that the entity has only certain data to synthesize. The freedom lies in its self-determination of just how it will use the data it has. Any entity, therefore, is free because it is finally responsible for the way in which it creates its own experience. No datum can force itself. On the other hand, no entity can conjure up its own data.⁹³

For an entity to have an experience, it must have antecedent data. Therefore, it is true to say that an entity's experiences are partially determined for it by outside causes. These causes do not, however, determine the precise nature of the experience itself. All they can do is establish certain possible effects. The very fact that in each experience many factors are at work attempting, often in

⁹²Hartshorne, Anselm's Discovery, op. cit., p. 206.

⁹³Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, op. cit., p. 94. Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., pp. 94-5.

conflicting ways, to influence the experience indicates that they cannot determine fully what the effect will be. This ultimate decision is made by the entity itself. It is the entity's synthesis of these multiple causes which determine what the experience is. Each synthesis is the assimilation of the data it receives and the transformation of that data into an experience that cannot be explained as simply the whole being the sum of its parts. While an analysis of external causes can go a long way in explaining why an experience is what it is, it cannot do so exhaustively. An experience cannot be fully described in terms of objects perceived and experiences remembered. An adequate description must take into account the factor by which the many yield the one. Even if all the causal factors of an experience could be deduced, the experience itself could not be explained for "there is the togetherness of them all, in a unitary feeling which gives each perception and each memory its unique place and value in this experience such as it could have in no other."⁹⁴

There are, of course, all sorts of different degrees of freedom. Freedom is possessed by all actualities in degrees ranging from negligible to extensive. One of the marks of a living person is the extensive freedom, and the more alive an entity or a society is, the greater will be its ability to create novelty.

⁹⁴Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 2.

SOCIAL PROCESS

Before discussing the final factor in the creative process (i.e., God) we must now make explicit something which has been implicit throughout the preceeding discussion. Process thought sees "reality as social process."⁹⁵ Whitehead identified his thought with a philosophical scheme he saw beginning with Descartes and ending with Hume, a scheme termed the "Philosophy of Organism."⁹⁶ Whitehead saw the intricate interconnectedness of all entities in the universe and was as interested in explaining this connectedness as he was in understanding each entity individually. He found that an understanding of an individual was indeed impossible if it excluded seeing that individual as an organism and as part of other organisms.⁹⁷

Up to this point, we have focused our attention on actual entities looking at them as individual, distinct units of reality. However, as we mentioned earlier, we are not aware of actual entities in normal experience. Almost without exception, we are aware of various groupings of actual entities. For example, I know that the chair I am sitting on is composed of various electrons, atoms, molecules, etc. This knowledge

⁹⁵Charles Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process (Glencoe and Boston: The Beacon Press, 1953). This is the title and thesis of the book.

⁹⁶Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 5.

⁹⁷Hartshorne defines an organism as a plurality of entities contributing directly to the value of a single entity, the whole. They do not need to be internally part of the whole in the sense of included. It is only necessary that they should contribute to each other's values. Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection (LaSalle: Open Court Publishing Co.), p. 195.

is available to me, however, only through scientific investigation. What is obvious to me is the chair itself. This illustration points us to the importance of understanding the social nature of reality. As Hartshorne says, "Social structure is the ultimate structure of existence,"⁹⁸ meaning that all reality is one vast social process made up of a myriad of other social processes.

Creative Synthesis as Social Process

The basic social process is the one we have been discussing, the experience of creative synthesis. Hartshorne praises as being a genuinely novel intuition Whitehead's statement, "The many become one and are increased by one."⁹⁹ This sentence underlines the fact that it is out of the many that the one emerges. The "heritage" or "tradition" of an entity is the social structure that gives it birth. Without this relationship to its past, it could not have a present. Creative synthesis is a genuine social process because it is dependent on the relationship of one entity, the subject, to others, its objects. Individual actual entities can only be understood as being part of a sequence of entities inheriting qualities from antecedent entities. These entities then pass on the qualities to their successors. An example of this is personality which is a special temporally linear case of such a social structure.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸Hartshorne, The Divine Realitivity, op. cit., p. 28.

⁹⁹Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 32.

¹⁰⁰Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 162.

The relationship that an entity has to its predecessors is not the only social relationship that it has. Each entity finds itself part of some structure of entities. Hartshorne points out that the higher one goes, the more obvious the social aspect of reality is. A man realizes that he is part of a family and a nation. Scientists acknowledge that organisms are associations of cells and that cells are associations of molecules and atoms. "The situation is that nothing could conceivably be known by any observer not to be social . . . thus our contention is that the social category fits all actual or conceivable facts of observation."¹⁰¹

Classes of Social Relationships

Any association of entities which is characterized by a genuine interconnectedness, no matter how loose it may be, is called a "nexus." When a nexus is characterized by a common characteristic, shared by all its members, it is called a "society." Societies can exhibit any degree of organization or specificity, but there is always an essential characteristic which defines that society as being what it is. Other characteristics can be considered as accidental and may vary as circumstances change.

Defining characteristic. This "defining characteristic," mentioned above, provides enduring individuality to a society and is process thought's equivalent to the category of substance in other philosophies. The defining characteristic as it persists from one entity to the next

¹⁰¹Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, op. cit., p. 32.

in the sequence of entities provides a continuing identity for a society.¹⁰² Hartshorne uses the concept of personal identity to illustrate this. He points out that a person is aware of his self-identity, and process thought does not seek to deny this experience. Rather, process thought insists on something additional. Each person has, besides his enduring individuality, his own unique, momentary self which is more determinate and fully actual than his enduring individuality, which, although real, is somewhat abstract. Hartshorne says:

It is thus not 'John' who literally says 'yes' today and 'no' tomorrow, but two subjects (without names, yet referred to through 'John' plus indications of context, or through 'I' (in the same manner), which subjects are for many important purposes 'the same,' and really the same. For there is a literally identical individuality structure, but (as follows from the inclusiveness of process) it is the successive occasions which have the common structure, not the common structure which has the occasions.¹⁰³

In speaking of a defining characteristic, we are talking about something which does not endure on its own but something which derives its endurance from the fact that it is exemplified in successive, connected occasions.

Enduring objects. One basic social structure is an "enduring object." An enduring object is a society of actual entities that are temporally contiguous and successive, each one a near repetition of the other. Cobb points out:

In such a society, no two occasions exist at the same time, but at each moment one such occasion occurs, prehending all the

¹⁰²Hartshorne, "Tillich's Doctrine of God," op. cit., p. 171.

¹⁰³Ibid.

preceeding occasions in the society, re-enacting the defining characteristic of the society, and mediating this pattern to its successors.¹⁰⁴

A molecule is a good example of an enduring object. It endures for a long time seemingly unchanged. It is however, no more than a succession of molecular happenings connected in such a way that it is possible to identify them as a molecule. What causes the overwhelming similarity of successive occasions in a molecule is the fact that the physical pole dominates each synthesis. There is an almost exact transfer of concrete data so that each molecular occasion virtually repeats its predecessor. The novelty that is present in enduring objects is trivial indeed. It is through enduring objects that stability is found in the cosmos.

Corpuscular societies. While science may spend considerable time examining molecules and other enduring objects, enduring objects are still far removed from general experience. What we are aware of in everyday life are more likely to be "corpuscular societies." When a society can be analyzed as being constituted by various enduring objects, intimately interrelated, it is said to be corpuscular.¹⁰⁵ A stone is an illustration of a corpuscular society. It is composed of a vast number of closely related molecules. It persists through a long period of time virtually unchanged because it is composed of enduring objects. This means that it, like the enduring objects which compose it, is characterized by massive physical inheritance and a minimum amount of novelty.

¹⁰⁴Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., p. 41.

¹⁰⁵Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 52.

Cobb cautions that the classification of a society as corpuscular does not have to be rigid. A society can contain many actual entities which form enduring objects and others which do not. It is according to the prominence of enduring objects that a society may be considered more or less corpuscular. Besides this, the exemplification of a defining characteristic varies from one society to another as does the decisiveness of their inheritance from previous members of the various enduring objects which provides from an infinite variety of degrees of order within the classification.¹⁰⁶

Living societies. Not all corpuscular societies are primarily characterized by stability and endurance for some demonstrate considerable novelty. Novelty is the opposite of endurance, and when an entity or a society exhibits more novelty than endurance, it is said to be living. In process thought "life means novelty." Some novelty is present in all syntheses and, therefore, there is no absolute gap between living and non-living things. None-the-less, a distinction can be made by the fact that some societies obviously display more novelty than others.¹⁰⁷

Novelty enters a synthesis through the mental pole. The mental pole, unlike the physical pole, is not bound to the entity's immediate predecessors and can include in the synthesis, data that are not immediately present. Life can then be attributed to an entity "when in some measure its reactions are inexplicable by any tradition of pure physical

¹⁰⁶Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., p. 42.

¹⁰⁷Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., pp. 145-156.

inheritance."¹⁰⁸ Novelty occurs when the process yields something that was not implicit in the preceeding situation.¹⁰⁹ Sherburne elaborates on this:

Explanation by "tradition" is merely another phraseology for explanation by "efficient cause." We require an explanation by "final cause." Thus a single occasion is alive when the subjective aim which determines its process of concrescence has embodied a novelty of definiteness not to be found in the inherited data The novelty is introduced conceptually and disturbs the inherited responsive adjustment.¹¹⁰

Societies which are dominated by entities which are dominated by their mental poles are living societies, for, as Whitehead points out, the characteristics of a society are, without exception, the characteristics of at least some of its component actual entities. No new characteristics emerge in social organization which are not present in the component members.¹¹¹ He says:

A 'living society' is one which includes some 'living occasions.' Thus a society may be more or less 'living' according to the prevalence in it of living occasions. Also an occasion may be more or less living according to the relative importance of the novel factors in its final satisfaction.¹¹²

Whitehead divides living societies into two classifications, democratic societies and monarchical societies. He also refers to these as vegetable and animal societies since these are his two primary illustrations of these types of societies. Vegetables are democracies because all members of the society are equal. There is no dominant or ruling

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 159.

¹⁰⁹Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, op. cit., p. 25.

¹¹⁰Donald Sherburne, A Key to Whitehead's Process and Reality (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1966), p. 91.

¹¹¹Whitehead, Adventure of Ideas, op. cit., pp. 260-61.

¹¹²Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 156.

member in this type of society. There is a high degree of uniformity in the society's existence, but there is also some diversification. A tomato, for example, is visibly riper one day than it was the last. In democratic societies there is a high level of coordination among the members of the society in order to insure its survival.

Monarchial societies have a dominant member which has precedence over all the rest. The other members of the society are structured and function in such a way that the dominant member of this society exercises the decisive controlling influence over them.¹¹³ This is demonstrated in the control exercised by the central nervous system in higher animals.

The term "monarchial" must not be taken too literally for it does not mean that the dominant member of the society makes all the decisions and other members are powerless. The situation is that their power is subordinated, in some cases radically subordinated, to the dominant member.¹¹⁴ The dominant member provides the society with a functional unity which is aimed beyond mere survival. For example, some attempt at attaining value characterizes these societies.

Routine and Innovation

We noted earlier that limitation and freedom were essential aspects of any entity's self-creative process. They likewise are essential aspects of social process and can be thought of in terms of routine and innovation. Hartshorne points out that every society behaves according to certain laws and customs. Without this routine of enduring,

¹¹³Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., pp. 156, 182.

¹¹⁴Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, op. cit., p. 38.

common conduct, there would be little cooperation or coordination and a great deal of conflict and frustration. Without routine, there could be no society. But, the routine of a society is never absolute. Innovation, defined as creative departures from the norm, is always permitted albeit it in varying degrees depending on the society. Innovation is always kept within the bounds of routine, but it is never eliminated.¹¹⁵

The higher the society, the more capable it is of containing members who do not do the routine or the predictable. Only a high level society could produce a Beethoven composing his symphonies or a Shakespeare writing his plays. Thus, in the dynamic established between routine and innovation, we have an ideal that explains every conceivable degree of orderliness and spontaneity. Hartshorne comments:

In a society with members on a very low level of existence, their individual freedom will be correspondingly slight, and the element of law will predominate. Given, at the other extreme, a society of superior individuals, say of geniuses, obviously the element of the customary, predictable routine will be there at a minimum.¹¹⁶

Living persons. Process thinkers reserve the term "living person" for those societies which have what is normally referred to as a mind, psyche, or soul.¹¹⁷ Cobb goes as far as to contend that "a living

¹¹⁵Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, op. cit., p. 31

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 163. Whitehead uses the term soul extensively in Adventure of Ideas (e.g.), pp. 17-31, but rarely elsewhere. Hartshorne, I suspect to avoid confusion with the religious use of the term, makes infrequent use of it. Cobb, however, employs it as a central concept. See "The Human Soul," A Christian Natural Theology, pp. 49-91. Whitehead also makes it clear that human beings are not the only animals possessing a soul. See Process and Reality, p. 64.

person is a soul."¹¹⁸ The soul is a society rather than an individual actual entity since it endures throughout the life of the society possessing it. Cobb says:

We must think of the soul as that society composed of all the momentary occasions of experience that make up the life history of the man. The soul is not an underlying substance undergoing accidental adventures. It is nothing more than the sequence of the experiences that constitute it.¹¹⁹

He goes on to point out several remarkable features of the soul.¹²⁰

First, it is remarkable in that it is the dominant occasion of the higher forms of animal society. It, therefore, can be seen as exercising a strong control over most aspects of the animal's behavior. Secondly, the soul is extraordinary in that it is a conscious experience. As we noted, Whitehead says that consciousness is one possible aspect of the subjective form of an experience. He also points out that it is possible only when the mental aspect of the prehension is strong. Furthermore, it depends on a very complex integration of conceptual and physical feelings. This is possible because the animal body is organized in such a way as to make this high level of experience possible. There is a constant flow of novelty from the various living occasions which compose the society to its dominant member.

The third remarkable aspect of the soul is that, even though it is an enduring object, the soul differs from other enduring objects in that its most distinctive feature is not its serial repetition of its predecessors but its aliveness or mentality. The soul, then, demonstrates

¹¹⁸Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., p. 51.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 48.

¹²⁰Ibid., pp. 48-51.

both the order and continuity characteristic of an enduring object and the novelty which characterizes life.

Hybrid prehensions. To understand how it is possible for this to happen, we need to make a distinction between two types of synthesis--pure and hybrid. Whitehead compares them in this way: "In a 'pure physical feeling' the actual entity which is the datum is objectified by one of its own physical feelings . . . In a 'hybrid physical feeling' the actual entity forming the datum is objectified by one of its own conceptual feelings."¹²¹

In its simplest form an actual entity must be synthesized physically in terms of what is concretely there and mentally in terms of those abstractions actualized in the data. Redness cannot be experienced if the flower seen is orange. Only orangeness may be experienced. The mental aspect of the synthesis is limited to what is physically present in the data. In a hybrid synthesis this is not the case. Abstractions may be synthesized which are not physically present. They are, however, present mentally. The contents transferred from the one entity to the next are contained in the mental pole of the entity being synthesized, not its physical pole.¹²² Johnson explains it in this way: "Actual entity 'A' has a hybrid physical feeling of actual entity 'B' if 'A' has

¹²¹Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., pp. 375-76. As indicated earlier, what Whitehead calls a "physical feeling" is what we have called the "physical aspect of synthesis."

¹²²"A hybrid prehension is the prehension by one subject of a conceptual prehension . . . belonging to the mentality of another subject." Ibid., p. 35.

a conceptual feeling involving the same datum as is prehended by a conceptual feeling in 'B'."¹²³

Cobb illustrates this by the example of his looking at a green tie and wishing it were brown. Here, he is encountering an object that is actually green but he is recalling the brownness of some previous experience, and he imaginatively experiences a brown tie rather than a green one. An occasion from the past is playing a part in the experience of the present. The pure prehension of the greenness, which is actually there, and the hybrid prehension of a brownness, which is not there, can be compared and contrasted with each other. The mental aspect of the synthesis can thereby visualize the green tie as being brown.¹²⁴

In social process dominated by enduring objects, hybrid synthesis rarely, if ever, occurs. In living persons hybrid synthesis dominates. Continuity and identity are maintained through the physical aspect of the synthesis, but the appearance of something belonging to the mental pole of a previous entity allows for novelty to be part of the synthesis. In a hybrid synthesis, whatever novelty has been attained in the past is made available for the future, and the living person is not confined to the step-by-step progression of its tradition.¹²⁵

To tie all this in to our original discussion of living persons, we can say that a living person is a social process which has a soul as its dominant occasion. The soul is constituted by a series of enduring

¹²³Johnson, Whitehead's Theory of Reality, op. cit., p. 31.

¹²⁴Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., pp. 33-4.

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 51. See also, Whitehead's Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 343.

objects which differ from other enduring objects in that they are primarily constituted by hybrid syntheses. Hence, both change and permanency, endurance and novelty characterize living persons.

A further item must be underlined. The soul of a living person has a radically relational character. In any one moment of its existence, it is an actual entity including in its becoming not only those objects with which it is in immediate contact but also the mental aspects of previous occasions. Since it is the dominant occasion of a living person, it is in touch, at least indirectly, with all the entities which constitute the society over which it presides. Through these it is in contact with a wider environment which constitutes the whole world, and, therefore, within the limitations of its perspective, can include the whole world in its becoming.¹²⁶

The soul-body relationship. The relationship of the soul to the body is also important to mention. The body, or more specifically the brain, is the locus of the soul. The experiences of the body are the primary data for the soul. The soul actually synthesizes only those experiences immediately contiguous to the brain, but these in turn have synthesized experiences contiguous to them and so forth throughout the body. Even the reception of sense data must be seen as the chain of synthetic events. "Sense data" are located outside the body and mediated to the soul through the experiences of special organs. The body, when functioning properly, mediates to the soul the knowledge the soul must have of its external environment, but the information that the soul

¹²⁶Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., p. 57.

receives is basically about the bodily reaction to the internal stimuli rather than about these stimuli themselves.¹²⁷

The soul is, in each of its successive states, like every other entity in that it receives its actuality through creative synthesis. There is not something already existing which receives actuality into itself. Rather, the soul is constituted by its experiences. The more a soul can receive, the more it can become. The more comprehensive the experiences of a soul, the more comprehensive that soul is.

The Human Soul

What we have just noted, leads us directly to discussing human beings, for here is an example of an organism with an extremely comprehensive soul.¹²⁸ Any discussion of the human soul must, however, be prefaced with the fact that process thought refuses to make any bifurcation between man and the rest of the natural order in which he appears. Pils points out:

A man, like other organisms, is a society of actual entities We have not, therefore, a doctrine of a hierarchy of entities as in the cases of Aristotelian ousial or Leibnizian monads. The familiar, traditional notion that man is a higher kind of entity is replaced by the notion that within the society which is a man, an especially high kind of event (consciousness, choice, abstract thought) occurs.¹²⁹

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 52. Cobb speculates that the actual location of the soul is in the "empty spaces" between brain cells.

¹²⁸It is outside the scope of this document to go into a detailed discussion of the process understanding of man; however, since human experience forms the basis of the "reformed subjectivist principle" mentioned earlier, man's status in the cosmic scheme needs to be noted.

¹²⁹Pils, Whitehead's Metaphysics, op. cit., p. 6.

If the human soul is characterized by a particularly high kind of event, in what does this event consist? One answer to this question, which Whitehead gives, is that the human soul is capable of greater novelty than other animal souls. He says:

The conceptual entertainment of unrealized possibility becomes a major factor in human mentality. In this way outrageous novelty is introduced, sometimes beautified, sometimes damned, and sometimes literally patented or protected by copyright.¹³⁰

This increase in novelty is not to be regarded as an end in itself. It is introduced for a purpose and in terms of purpose. This purpose is the attainment of value. Even though some struggle toward values can be found in other animal life, this is vastly extended in man. The ability to create novelty which he possesses is essential for attaining greater value. Morals and religion arise as the human soul strives toward the best possible satisfaction in each occasion. Whitehead believes that other animals do have some sort of morality, but only man has religion. The difference between the two being that morality emphasizes the one specific occasion while religion emphasizes "the unity of ideals inherent in the universe." He elaborates this by saying further:

In animals we can see emotional feeling, dominantly derived from bodily functions, and yet tinged with purposes, hopes and expressions derived from conceptual functioning. In mankind, the dominant dependence on bodily function seems still there. And yet the life of a human being receives its worth, its importance from the way in which unrealized ideals shape its purposes and tinge its actions. The distinction between men and animals is in one sense only a difference in degree. But the extent of the degree makes all the difference.¹³¹

¹³⁰Whitehead, Modes of Thought, op. cit., p. 36.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 39.

Another factor that distinguishes the human soul from others is its awareness of the social nature of reality. Man realizes that he is part of the world and is aware of that world and his relationship to it. He is aware that he influences others and they him. Further, his choice of subjective aim in each occasion of his becoming, is a conscious one. In addition to these, man can symbolize his world and think about that which is not his own experience. He can think and think about being a thinker.¹³²

This ability to symbolize is most particularly displayed in man's use of language. Here again, language is present in other animals, but in none is it so extensively developed, so refined, as in man. Cobb finds that, "When we ask specifically what distinguishes man from the other animals, the single clear answer is language."¹³³ Whitehead found language and the distinctiveness of the human mind so correlative that it is impossible to say whether the human mind has created language or language the human mind. Language makes possible the comprehensiveness of the human mind. It provides a way to store and express the totality of what has been encountered and comprehended during a person's life.¹³⁴

¹³²Pittenger, Alfred North Whitehead, op. cit., p. 28f. Pittenger also lists the following characteristics of man: rationality, ability to communicate, ability to establish relationships, decision making which allows a person to strive toward an aim and to be responsible for achieving enduring good.

¹³³Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., p. 59.

¹³⁴Whitehead, Modes of Thought, op. cit., p. 57.

GOD

Having looked at the social nature of reality, we can proceed to our discussion of the fourth factor in creative synthesis, God. In the preceeding section, we mentioned that process thought sees the entirety of creation as social process. Hartshorne calls the cosmos the all-inclusive society of societies.¹³⁵ It is the ultimate social structure including all other societies within itself.

The fact that there is any cosmos at all is, for process thinkers, sufficient grounds for postulating that there is an order throughout the cosmos. According to Whitehead:

It is not the case that there is an actual world which happens to exhibit an order of nature. There is an actual world because there is an order in nature. If there were no order, there would be no world. Also, because there is a world, we know that there is an order.¹³⁶

What is at stake here is not whether perfect cosmic order exists. Any order, perfect or imperfect, requires limitation. There is no need for any particular limitation but only some sort of limitation. The contingent characteristics of the cosmos are irrelevant as to whether or not there is an order in it.

To achieve the limitation necessary to create order in so radically diverse a society as the cosmos, there is a need for a dominant member who is able to set limits to the chaotic possibilities arising from the multiple instances of freedom it includes. If there is no such member, there can be no explanation at all for the fact that there is

¹³⁵Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 51.

¹³⁶Whitehead, Religion in the Making, op. cit., p. 101.

order and stability in the cosmos and that the cosmos does not dissolve itself by means of unmitigated conflict. Hartshorne insists that "the universe as a going concern must be a monarchical society if it is a society at all."¹³⁷

God as Cosmic Orderer

God is the dominant member of the cosmic society. Concerning this, Hartshorne says that God is the supreme form of a personally ordered society. His defining characteristic is the divine perfection. He elaborates:

Each of his states will be the uniquely adequate summing up of the cosmic actuality correlated with it and of all past states of the divine society. And it will be the only society whose defining characteristic could not fail to be actualized in ever new (and greater) states.¹³⁸

As the dominant member of the cosmic society, he supplies the order and limitation necessary to maintain it. Again quoting Whitehead:

God is ultimate limitation, and his existence is the ultimate irrationality. For no reason can be given for just that limitation which it stands in His nature to impose He is the ground of concrete reality. No reason can be given for the nature of God because that nature is the ground of reality.¹³⁹

A divine orderer is needed because the order in cosmic process is unintelligible without his influence. This is so because each entity is at least minimally free and some are maximally so. Each transcends its causal, determinative nexus. Process would come to an end if limits were not imposed upon the development of incompatible lines of process. The order found in the world is "enjoyed" but not created by the various

¹³⁷Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, op. cit., p. 39.

¹³⁸Hartshorne, Anselm's Discovery, op. cit., p. 291.

¹³⁹Whitehead, Religion in the Making, op. cit., p. 161.

actual entities. Since there is no obligatory order logically required of entities, it is either blind fate or an ultimate synthesis which creates the order. The only alternative to synthesis is a chance agreement of the multitude of lesser creative acts.¹⁴⁰

It is vastly preferable logically to posit the existence of an ultimate synthesis than chance agreement since there seems to be no way of understanding how any order at all could come out of the confusion and anarchy implied by a multiplicity of creative agents, none of which are totally influential or wise. Only through an agent who can include in himself the totality of creation, can this order come. Hartshorne says, "Apart from God, not only would this world not be conceivable but no world, no state of reality, or even unreality, could be understood."¹⁴¹ He elaborates:

If all individuals make their own decisions, act with a certain spontaneity, what prevents universal conflict and confusion? Can all things freely conspire together to make an orderly world? Each adjusts to all the others; but one cannot adjust to chaos. Hence the notion of 'mutual adjustment' presupposes the solution of the problem of order and does not furnish it. Suppose, however, that each individual adjusts, not simply to others more or less like itself, but to one supreme free agent; then, since all reflect the influence of this one agent, they are thereby put into a certain degree of conformity to each other. The supreme agent decides the outlines of the world order, this decision the lesser agents accept; what is still left for them to decide is by comparison trivial.¹⁴²

To underline what Hartshorne is saying here, God is the orderer of the cosmos because he, and he alone, influences all other individuals. It is this influence that supplies the order which is there.

¹⁴⁰Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 164.

¹⁴¹Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, op. cit., p. 53.

¹⁴²Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 133.

The Dipolar Nature of God

To understand how this ordering happens, we need to look at God as process thinkers visualize him. Such an understanding begins by noticing that God, like every other individual, is dipolar. Whitehead is explicit: "Any instance of experience is dipolar whether that instance be God or an actual occasion of the world."¹⁴³

God's dipolar nature is the key to understanding him and his relationship to other entities and to the entirety of the created order. For Hartshorne, God necessarily includes both abstract existence and concrete actuality. Gragg comments that in his notion of a dipolar diety, Hartshorne has adapted Morris Cohen's "Law of Polarity" which dictates that both halves of a pair of ultimate contraries should be affirmed because they are mutually interdependent and correlative.¹⁴⁴ Hartshorne can, therefore, speak of God as being eternal in one aspect of his being (his "primordial nature"). The same holds true for all other contraries. Each of the opposites describes one facet of God's being. He is in one facet of his being absolute, infinite, abstract and necessary and in the other relative, finite, concrete and contingent. One

¹⁴³Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 54. Although the basis for comparing God's attributes and those of the creatures is discussed in detail in the last chapter of this thesis, we need to mention here that process thinkers agree with Whitehead that "God is not the exception to all metaphysical categories . . . he is their chief exemplification." Applying this principle to our discussion here, God's dipolarity is not just another instance of dipolarity but rather the supreme, unsurpassable example of it. God's dipolarity is different in principle from all others by being radically superior to them. In our analysis we will find that God far surpasses every other instance of reality in every aspect of both poles of his nature.

¹⁴⁴Alan Gragg, Charles Hartshorne, Makers of the Modern Theological Mind, Bob E. Patterson, ed. (Waco: Word Books, 1973), p. 84.

illustration of this is divine knowledge. It is infinite because God knows all the potentiality of the world as potential. It is finite because God knows as actual those worlds (and only those worlds) which have in fact come into being.

In saying that God is dipolar, process thinkers mean that he has both a mental and physical, an abstract and a concrete nature. As indicated above, the mental aspect is called his primordial nature; the physical his consequent nature. We must be very cautious here, as we were in studying actual entities in general, to make sure we do not think of these as independent aspects of God, but rather as the two basic interdependent ways in which God functions. John Lansing suggests, quite correctly, that we should not think of the words "primordial nature" and "consequent nature" as nouns referring to different elements of God suggesting that each is a separate agent with a distinctive function. Rather, we should regard them as adjectives describing the character of how God as a whole functions.¹⁴⁵

The Primordial Nature of God

When God is "viewed as primordial, he is the ultimate conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality."¹⁴⁶ It is in his primordial nature that all possibilities for future becomings are envisioned, and it is from the primordial nature that these possibilities are made available for entities in the actual world.

¹⁴⁵John W. Lansing, "The Natures of Whitehead's God," Process Studies, III/3, (Fall, 1973) p. 144.

¹⁴⁶Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 521.

The way process thinkers view these potentialities differs from one thinker to another. According to Whitehead, all possibilities are eternal objects which are stored in the primordial nature. Hartshorne, who, as we have seen, rejects the idea of eternal objects, insists that God creates the potentiality for each new entity as that entity arises. He says that the primordial nature is, "God in eternity knowing only what is itself eternal, his own ideal system of ideals for the creation."¹⁴⁷

Hartshorne feels that Whitehead's idea of eternal objects is incompatible with his notion that characteristics are products of change. Hartshorne praises Whitehead as being one of the first philosophers to see in the principle of evolution that the characteristics of things are products of change. Therefore, it is possible to do away with notions of laws as eternally fixed yet quantitatively definite aspects of behavior. Like Platonic forms, Whitehead's eternal objects unnecessarily control change. They ought to be regarded as products of change rather than as having infinitely antedated the subjects in which they are objectified. Universals should not be specific qualities but only vague general directions of determinability or specificability. Hartshorne says, "Since by Whitehead's own method of extensive abstraction, continuity is treated as the possibility of endless division . . . eternally there is just the unitary vague field of quality, not a set of point-like determinate qualities."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 133.

¹⁴⁸Charles Hartshorne, "The Relativity of Non-Reality," Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce, p. 244.

Hartshorne points out that his views on this issue have been influenced by Peirce's conception of the evolution of Platonic forms. This is the central issue for Hartshorne in the discussion. Eternal objects can participate in the temporal flow. Hartshorne is, therefore, attracted to Peirce's idea of the continuum of possibility as a correction of Whitehead's idea of eternal objects.¹⁴⁹

That God's primordial aspect is the source of novelty can be shown by looking at one aspect of the creative process. We have been speaking of the process of becoming as the emerging of one actuality from many possibilities which has implied that creative synthesis is as much a process of exclusion as it is a process of inclusion.¹⁵⁰ Most of the possibilities simply remain possible and do not become part of the real world. This excluded potential must be somewhere, and Whitehead's ontological principle, which we looked at earlier, demands that it be with some actual entity. Further, this entity would have to be a non-temporal entity, leaving only God in his primordial aspect as the reservoir of potentiality. We have already seen that the potential which is realized is relevant to that which is not, and the unrealized potential must remain available for future concrescences or else there is no possibility for novelty. Whitehead concludes that "apart from God, eternal objects unrealized in the actual world would be relatively non-existent for the future concrescence in question."¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹James, The Concrete God, op. cit., p. 50. Hartshorne cites The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, Vol. 5, Section 194, pp. 185-212.

¹⁵⁰Whitehead, Religion in the Making, op. cit., p. 109.

¹⁵¹Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 46.

Specific functions of the primordial nature. As part of being the location of all potentiality, three specific functions are attributed by Whitehead to the primordial nature.¹⁵¹ First, the primordial nature grades the various potentials for becoming in terms of their relevance to one another. According to Whitehead, "The general relationships of eternal objects to each other, relationships of diversity and pattern are their relationships in God's conceptual realization. Apart from this realization, there is mere isolation indistinguishable from non-entity."¹⁵² What Whitehead is saying here is that the primordial nature arranges all eternal objects in such a way that they form a coherent, logical whole and, thereby, do not exist as an unintelligible mass. They are systematically cataloged.

The second function of the primordial nature is that it grades eternal objects in terms of their relevance for inclusion in a particular occasion. "By reason of the actuality of the primordial valuation of pure potentials, each eternal object has a definite effective relevance to each concrescent process."¹⁵³ The primordial nature distinguishes between general potentiality and real potentiality. General potentiality is the "bundle of possibilities" neatly ordered and arranged as is provided by the totality of eternal objects. Real potentiality is that which is conditioned by the data from the actual world and could become part of a particular synthesis. General potentiality is absolute and

¹⁵¹Lansing, "The Natures of Whitehead's God," op. cit., pp. 144f.

¹⁵²Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 392.

¹⁵³Lansing, "The Natures of Whitehead's God," loc. cit., p. 64.

real potentiality is relative to some actual entity.¹⁵⁴ The primordial nature's grading of eternal objects in terms of their relevance to one another is general and eternal since no reference needs to be made to any historical entity. Real potentiality is that bit of general potentiality which is available to one specific entity in its particular historical setting.

Cobb feels that these two functions may at first glance seem to be in conflict with each other. If there is one eternal ordering of all possibilities, is it possible for there to be more than one creative order for the universe. Whitehead obviously feels that there are others, but it is difficult to see how one unchanging order can provide a specific novel aim for every new actual entity. The solution, according to Cobb, is that God's ordering of eternal objects is not just one simple order but rather an infinite variety of orders. He says:

God's ordering of possibilities is such that every possible state of the actual world is already envisioned as possible and every possible development from that actual state of the world is already envisioned as appraised. Thus, the one primordial ordering of eternal objects is relevant to every actuality with perfect specificity.¹⁵⁵

What we have, then, is an ordering that takes into account every aspect of a particular situation, but this ordering is not ordering which is created as each new entity arises, but one which has existed eternally.

We have noted that Hartshorne is unhappy with the notion of eternal objects. Therefore, it comes as no surprise to find that he is also opposed to a fixed order, or even a multiplicity of fixed orders, of potentiality. He prefers to think of initial aims as "created rather

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 101.

¹⁵⁵Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., pp. 155-56.

than selected" out of the primordial potentiality.¹⁵⁶ He insists that this has the advantage of being more creative and of maintaining the abstractness of the primordial nature. It further avoids a rigid division of everything into sheer individuals and sheer universals. Any eternal order of potentiality seems to go against the main thrust of the system which is genuine continuity and relativity. He further argues:

If eternal possibilities are fully definite items, then God's concepts never change, and his entire conceptual being is fixed forever. All that can change (or give place to new ones) are his physical prehensions and with them his hybrid prehensions of the impure potentials as relevant to a given state of the cosmos. The hybrid prehensions will change, however, only in their physical constituents, and the impure potentials will be simply identical with certain eternal objects as selected for a given occasion by the physical prehensions. If on the other hand, impure potentials are more definite than anything to be found in eternal possibility, then God's concepts must become more determinate with time and thus it will not be true that the conceptual aspect of his being is completely primordial just as it is not true that the physical aspect of his being is completely consequent.¹⁵⁷

With specific reference to the two functions of the primordial nature under discussion, Hartshorne would insist that what the primordial nature does is not catalog specific possibilities and then decide which one is best for a particular entity but rather from the vast generalized potentiality it contains, the primordial nature will create an initial aim uniquely appropriate for each occasion.

The third function of the primordial nature is that it makes this graded relevance of eternal objects effective in the world through providing the initial aim for each concretant occasion. "In this sense

¹⁵⁶Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 59.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., p. 77.

God is the principle of concretion, namely, he is that actual entity from which each temporal concrescence receives that initial aim from which its self-causation starts."¹⁵⁸ The initial aim which the primordial nature provides is of crucial importance for the actual entity because it constitutes the entity as a self-creating subject giving it its initial conceptual valuations and initial physical purposes. It is in receiving the initial aim that each entity begins its career. Hartshorne would agree fully with this function.

God's Giving of the Initial Aim Through His Primordial Nature

In this third function of the primordial nature, we find the process understanding of the specific part God plays in creative synthesis. God gives each entity its initial aim which begins its self-creative process. What makes each actual entity self-creative is, as we said earlier, the fact that it has a subjective form which determines how it will synthesize the data it receives. This subjective form is determined by the subjective aim--the over-riding purpose an actual entity has in its self-creation. Whitehead's ontological principle would remind us that an actual entity cannot generate its initial aim anymore than it can generate the data it prehends. The initial aim is part of the data an entity receives. At the same time it receives from its tradition the other initial data for its synthesis, it receives its initial aim from God. The first feeling toward self-hood an actual entity has is the one God provides.

The initial aim points the entity toward a particular satisfaction, the best satisfaction possible for it. Whitehead says that in

¹⁵⁸Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 374.

supplying the initial aim, God is aiming at "maximum intensity of experience for the entity." This could also be called self-satisfaction. What this self-satisfaction would be is largely determined by the situation in which the entity will find itself, for the entity cannot be isolated from its environment. The initial aim, therefore, offers the entity maximum self-satisfaction through maximum harmonization with its environment and with all of creation. Unless such harmony is achieved, the entity's satisfaction will not be the best possible for it. The initial aim which God gives an entity, since it comes from his own subjective aim, is the best actualization for the entity in terms of itself, best for the entity's environment in terms of its relationship to its social structure, and best in terms of all future entities' concrescences.

The Consequent Nature of God

The primordial nature describes God in his absolute, eternal, necessary existence. For most traditional Western metaphysicians, such would be a complete and adequate description. Process thinkers, however, believe that the primordial nature only half describes God. He must also be described as dependent, relative, contingent actuality. This describes his "consequent nature." Whitehead strongly repudiates ideas of God such as "the unmoved mover" and any attribution of characteristics which would make him an exception to the categories used in understanding other entities.¹⁵⁹ Hartshorne contends that:

¹⁵⁹Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., pp. 519 and 521.

Unfortunately, metaphysics was sidetracked for two millennia by an insufficiently exact, insufficiently analytic conception of God as the 'absolute,' the 'perfect,' the 'complete,' or 'self-sufficient' or 'independent' being. This conception . . . does not meet the concrete religious need.¹⁶⁰

The attack on traditional theism is, perhaps, most dramatically expressed in Whitehead's list of antitheses:

It is as true to say that God is permanent and the World fluent, as that the World is permanent and God is fluent.

It is as true to say that God is one and the World many, as that the World is one and God many.

It is as true to say that, in comparison with the World, God is actual eminently, as that, in comparison with God, the world is actual eminently.

It is true to say that the World is immanent in God, as that God is immanent in the World.

It is as true to say that God transcends the World, as that the World transcends God.

It is as true to say that God creates the World, as that the World creates God.¹⁶¹

Hartshorne says that in affirming only one half of these antithesis without affirming the other, traditional theism is guilty of a "monopolar prejudice" which tragically distorts its image of God. He agrees with traditional thought, that God is absolute but not that he is the absolute as though this were a complete description of his character. Absoluteness is only one side of his character. Relativity is the other side. God is the supreme relativity. His proposal is as follows:

¹⁶⁰Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, op. cit., p. 66.

¹⁶¹Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 528.

The standard terms of religious philosophizing--absolute, infinite, immutable, eternal, self-sufficient, necessary, universal cause--do apply to the God of religion, but they apply less simply and exclusively than has been supposed. God is somehow absolute, infinite, immutable, and supreme cause; but in such fashion that he can also be relative, finite, mutable and supreme effect. God comes under both sides of the basic contraries.¹⁶²

Hartshorne goes on to point out that God's being on "both sides" is different in principle from other entities because he uniquely exemplifies the categories. He is finite like no one else is and infinite like no one else is. He is both cause and effect in a uniquely eminent sense. This Hartshorne calls the "principle of dual transcendence."¹⁶³

God's consequent nature is his physical pole. It is composed of his syntheses of the satisfactions of all actual entities composing the temporal world. "God is to be conceived as originated by conceptual experience with this process of completion and motivated by consequent physical experience initially derived from the temporal world."¹⁶⁴ In saying this, process thought departs radically from traditional Western metaphysics by allowing--indeed insisting--that God is influenced, or more specifically created by, the world. He is not only the supreme creator in his primordial nature; he is also the supreme creature in his consequent nature.¹⁶⁵ This will become apparent as our analysis proceeds.

¹⁶²Hartshorne, "The God of Religion and the God of Philosophy," op. cit., p. 162.

¹⁶³Ibid., p. 163. The principle of dual transcendence is discussed thoroughly in the appendix on analogy.

¹⁶⁴Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 524.

¹⁶⁵Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 134.

Functions of the consequent nature. Two functions are performed by God's consequent nature--two functions which correspond directly to those of the physical pole of any actual entity.

First, God synthesizes into his own experience, each and every satisfaction that has been attained throughout the cosmos. In other discussion of relativity, we noted that each entity is relevant to all others. Just as an entity prehends, either positively or negatively, all entities in his actual world, so God prehends all those in his. The crucial difference here is that any other entity's world is quite limited but God's actual world is the entirety of the cosmos. Just as the primordial nature of God is the source of all possibility, the consequent nature is the receptical of all actuality. This includes all those satisfactions or values which are attained by entities but not prehended by their successors. Hartshorne points out that most entities are negatively prehended by other entities which is virtually the same as not being prehended at all. Were no entity to use this entity, it would be wasted. Only a divine, supreme synthesis can effectively and positively unify this otherwise rejected data. God, because he synthesizes all satisfaction, holds all things together in his consequent nature.¹⁶⁶

Because God synthesizes all that happens in the temporal world, his consequent nature is said to be temporal. As we have seen, occasions of experiences happen successively in the temporal world which suggests that God's synthesis, being dependent on these experiences for data, are likewise successive. This temporality in God is not, however, identical

¹⁶⁷ Cobb, *A Christian Natural Theology*, op. cit., p. 162.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 164.

with the temporality of other entities. With other entities, temporality means perishing. With God this is not so. As Cobb says, "Every achievement of value in the temporal world is preserved everlastingly in God's consequent nature."¹⁶⁷ Hartshorne defines this everlastingness of God's consequent nature as being "the power of retaining experiences containing also novel elements--in short, the growth of experience without loss, addition without subtraction."¹⁶⁸

The consequent nature of God is also temporal in the sense that development does take place within it as God constantly synthesizes new data. Where this development differs from the development of other entities is that with God there is no loss of the vividness of an experience. With other entities there is. That development does take place in the consequent nature further suggests that at least in one sense, the consequent nature is incomplete. God constantly receives new data into himself and is always open to receive new data. On the other hand, there is also a sense in which the consequent nature is complete in that it has received everything that has happened. Nothing is either completely lost or totally rejected.

That God includes everything in his consequent nature does not mean that he includes everything just as it is, which brings us to the second function of God's consequent nature. Not only does God receive all value attained by all entities into himself, but as he does so, he performs his own creative synthesis of this data. In any synthesis, data is objectified by the subject in some particular way depending on

¹⁶⁷Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., p. 162.

¹⁶⁸Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 191.

the subjective form of the synthesis. God creates out of the world at any one moment, one harmonious integrated unity of experience. God makes what he will out of what he receives. He decides how he will be affected by what is included in his consequent nature. This is an important point to understand, Whitehead does insist that God "looses nothing," but he qualifies himself by adding "that can be saved." This means that each entity contributes "such elements as it can" to God.¹⁶⁹ Some value from each experience is saved, but it is harmonized by God with other experiences all of which retain their own identity in the one experience. Whitehead summarizes this by saying that God's consequent nature is "the realization of the actual world through the unity of his nature and the transformation of his wisdom."¹⁷⁰

Good and Evil in God's Consequent Nature

What has been said above implies that with God, just as with other entities, there is a subjective form, a valuation in each synthesis. God, therefore, determines the ultimate value of any experience. Specific illustration of this is found in the fact that both good and evil are part of God's experience of the world.¹⁷¹ God receives both good and evil, but the evil he transmutes into good. In no way should this be seen as denying the reality of evil. Process thought always acknowledges the reality of evil but further points out that God is able to overcome the evil in the world with good. Evil is overcome but not eliminated. It becomes an element in God's total experience, but in terms of the

¹⁶⁹Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 525.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., p. 524.

¹⁷¹Ibid., p. 531.

total experience, it has been used to stimulate its opposite, and, thus, the experience as a whole is good. Whitehead is quite clear about the reality of evil. "Every fact is what it is, a fact of pleasure, of joy, of pain, or of suffering."¹⁷² This means that God, in his consequent nature, does experience suffering and tragedy and does sympathize with them. Whitehead says God is "the fellow sufferer who understands."¹⁷³ He is more than that, though. His sympathy goes farther than just feeling the pain that others feel. It also involves transforming this pain into the best possible harmony within his own nature. Hartshorne says:

Essentially it is creaturely fulfillments that enrich the divine life; creaturely frustrations are misfortunes for God . . . of such misfortunes . . . we ourselves derive optimal value from the health of our bodily cells, but we should do the best we can when they are unhealthy. They not only lose nothing by this, they gain something. If we do not make the best of their ills, we add to them. So with God and his cosmic body.¹⁷⁴

Hartshorne goes on to point out that God inherits creaturely decisions as creaturely decisions, not as his own decisions. In synthesizing them, he does not enact them for they have already happened. What happens in synthesis is that he uses these as the basis for his own decisions, his own experience, and in this experience whatever good is possible is attained.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷²Ibid., p. 532.

¹⁷³Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 241.

¹⁷⁴Ibid.

Summary

Now it is possible to see clearly the inseparability of the primordial and consequent nature of God. It is on the basis of the harmony achieved in his own consequent nature that God is able to offer the best possible initial aim to all subsequent entities. Whether in the Whiteheadian sense of selecting the best possible eternal object or in the Hartshornian sense of creating the best possible aim, God does so on the basis of the harmony he has created for himself out of his previous synthesis of the actual world. Whitehead summarizes this interaction between God and the cosmos in this way:

First, there is the "phase of conceptual origination." This occurs when God begins the creative process by providing the entities with their initial aims. The phase is deficient in actuality, but it is rich in the potential for fulfillment of the divine initiative.

Secondly, there is the "temporal phase of physical origination." Here, based on the conditions determined in the first phase, the individual entities perform their own creative synthesis, and full actuality is achieved. What is absent in this phase is a unity of the various entities with each other.

Thirdly, there is the "phase of perfected actuality." In this phase, God takes all the experiences occurring in the second phase and unifies them everlastingly. The many become one without loss of their own identity. This phase is dependent on the previous two phases.

Finally, the fourth phase is when the creative action completes itself. The harmonization achieved in the previous phase passes back

into the world, and this "perfected actuality" becomes available for the experience of each subsequent entity.¹⁷⁵

God's Subjective Aim

The previous discussion has shown that God is the beginning and the end of the creative process. The question that must now be answered is what is God's purpose in creation, or, to use the language of process thought, what is God's subjective aim?

Whitehead says that "the teleology of the universe is directed toward the production of Beauty."¹⁷⁶ He has defined beauty as being the mutual adaptation of the several factors in an occasion of experience. As Johnson points out, Whitehead is here indicating the actual state of affairs which must be present if beauty is to be achieved.¹⁷⁷ Whitehead distinguishes two main types of adaptation, either within an entity itself or within a nexus of entities, which achieve beauty. The first is the lack of interference among the various parts. This is the minor form of beauty. The second is that, in addition to the absence of interference, there are also striking contrasts of content.¹⁷⁸ This is the major form of beauty. In this form of beauty there is found a harmony

¹⁷⁵Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 532

¹⁷⁶Whitehead, Adventure of Ideas, op. cit., p. 265.

¹⁷⁷Johnson

¹⁷⁸Whitehead, Adventure of Ideas, op. cit., p. 324.

of patterned contrasts in which each part enhances the whole and each part is enhanced by the whole.¹⁷⁹

Hartshorne is particularly interested in the second type of beauty. For there to be great beauty there must be intensity, and this depends on the amount of diversity that can be integrated into an experience. "Aesthetic value is found in diversified, harmonious experiences. This agrees with the old formula, beauty is unity in variety."¹⁸⁰ There is unity and variety in any experience. One of these may, however, totally dominate the other. Beauty is found in the balance between unity and variety. "Given a certain complexity, beauty is the diversification of that complexity just to the extent that the aspects of unity, or similarity, are no more, and no less impressive than the aspect of diversity."¹⁸¹ What Hartshorne sees as the essential point in the formula of "unity in variety" is that while success is single, the possibilities of failure are dual, lying on the opposite ends of the continuum. Beauty is balance. Discord is not good but neither is to tame a harmony. "To be bored to death is no better than to be shocked to death."¹⁸² This is, of course, the Aristotelian "Golden Mean" the desirable quality being found between two undesirable extremes. God's subjective aim is, therefore, to achieve this balance between unity and variety, between monotony

¹⁷⁹Ibid., p. 339. Whitehead uses the sculptured figures on the famous porch of the Cathedral at Chartres as an illustration. Each has an individual beauty and each contributes to the beauty of the whole which in turn enhances its own beauty.

¹⁸⁰Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 303.

¹⁸¹Ibid., p. 304.

¹⁸²Ibid.,

and chaos, between hopeless complexity and superficial simplicity, between too much freedom and too much limitation.

God aims at both maximum self-satisfaction and maximum satisfaction for the creatures. There is, in fact, no difference between the two. Hartshorne comments, "God, I hold, is an artist fostering and loving the beauty of the creatures, the harmonies and intensities of their experiences, as data for his own."¹⁸³ This is in no way "selfishness" on his part, for his future good includes the future good of all others. Again citing Hartshorne, "God alone inherits all the harvests for which he, or anyone, sows the seed . . . God cannot benefit another without benefiting himself. In his case, self-interest and altruism are indeed coincident."¹⁸⁴

Hartshorne believes that the basic idea of beauty as "integrated diversity and intensity of experience" is metaphysical and valid for any aspect of reality. He is quite clear about its ethical dimension. To aim at beauty is valid ethically when this involves long term considerations. It is not just at momentary satisfaction which God aims but at a satisfaction which will make possible an even greater attainment of value in the future. He comments:

The aesthetic value of life is realized in relation to other individuals and to the cosmos. Moral value is realized in adopting aims for the future that transcend personal advantage. Life is enjoyed as it is lived; but its eventual worth will

¹⁸³Ibid., p. 309.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 309-10.

consist in the contribution it has made to something more enduring than any animal, or than any species of animal. The final beauty is the "beauty of holiness."¹⁸⁵

God as the Cosmic Mind and the Cosmos as God's Body

We mentioned previously that the cosmos is the ultimate social structure for it represents the unity of all societies whatever they may be. Furthermore, such a society, due to its complexity, cannot be a "democracy" but must be a "monarchy" having a dominant member who exercises sufficient control and coordination to insure the maintenance and continuance of the society. As we have indicated, the dominant member of the cosmic society is God. "God is the personal order of the inclusive society of societies (the cosmos) and the cosmos is God's body."¹⁸⁶

The best way we can conceptualize the relationship between God and the cosmos is through the mind-body analogy, for only in this analogy do we have an instance of mentality dealing directly with physical reality.¹⁸⁷ Stated precisely, this analogy reads that God is to the world as the mind is to the body. Hartshorne points out that the idea of the cosmos being God's body is valid if the notion of body is sufficiently generalized to cover the supreme case. He does this by means of defining body as "simply that much of the world with which the mind . . . has effective, immediate interactions of mutual inheritance, and over

¹⁸⁵Ibid., p. 321. An excellent "Theology of Beauty" based on process thought is William Dean's Coming To, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press), 1972.

¹⁸⁶Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op.cit., p. 90.

¹⁸⁷Hartshorne, "The God of Religion and the God of Philosophy," op. cit., p. 155.

which its influence is dominant."¹⁸⁸ This is the relationship God has to the cosmos, so we can quite properly call the cosmos his body.

Hartshorne quotes with approval the following statement from Nevin Harner:

It is hard to think of God as being at one and the same time truly immanent and truly transcendent. We human beings . . . are immanent in our bodies in the sense that our life is intimately bound up with and expressed through our bodies. At the same time, we are transcendent to our bodies in the sense that we do not remain a dimly diffused energy but somehow, somewhere come to a self-conscious focus and can look down upon our bodies and to a degree master them. In the same way, God may be thought of as being immanent in the universe in that his life is intimately bound up with and expressed through it, and at the same time transcendent of his universe in that somehow, somewhere he comes to a self-conscious focus and is more than his universe This dual relationship in ourselves . . . we accept . . . everyday as a fact; we may as well do the same concerning God. What is true of the microcosm can also be true of the macrocosm.¹⁸⁹

Obviously, this mind-body analogy is no crude anthropomorphism, and Hartshorne feels that, when properly understood, it has none of the degrading effects that suggesting God has a body is supposed to have. Indeed, it is the only effective way of saying that God has social relations with all things that is uniquely adequate. Also, it insures that God is considered radically superior to the individual societies that compose his body.

The mind-body relationship. To understand the appropriateness of the mind-body analogy, we should look at what is the modern understanding of the mind-body relationship. Modern science has shown what,

¹⁸⁸Ibid.

¹⁸⁹Nevin C. Harner, "Three Ways to Think of God," Religious Education, XXIV, p. 217. Quoted by Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 208. The elipses are Hartshorne's.

according to Hartshorne, ought to have been inferred from philosophical principles, that "the solidarity of the body is an exaggeration of sense perception." Although we perceive macroscopically the body as one individual, viewed microscopically we realize that this one individual is really many individuals. As sense perception has expanded through modern technology, we realize that reality of multiple, formerly invisible constituents of our body. "A body, to the best of our knowledge is really a 'world' of individuals, and a mind, if the body is one having a mind (or one capable of thinking and feeling) is to that body something like an indwelling God."¹⁹⁰ Hartshorne is, therefore, inviting us to consider ourselves as many individuals unified and directed by our minds. Our bodies are from one perspective a whole, a single individual, but from another more precise perspective, they are individuals unified into the one reality transcending them all.

The mind-body analogy thus defined is apt for describing the relationship of God to the world. An example of why this is so is knowledge. Knowledge, as we experience it, varies in immediacy and distinctness. We know only a very few things really well. We must, therefore, rely on imagination and speculation to fill in the gaps. The more we know and the better we understand what we know, the less need there is, except for projections into the future, for such imagination and speculation. Omniscience is nothing other than a completely "clear intuition of the entire cosmos."¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 177.

¹⁹¹Ibid., p. 178.

Power is another example where the mind-body analogy is helpful. As human beings, we have limited power over some things. Indirectly, that is thought intermediaries, such as our muscles, we have control over a number of things, but directly, we have very little control indeed. In fact, we have direct control only of ourselves, our own bodies. If "control" is the ability to carry out a purpose, the only immediate effect of our purposing is the change in ourselves. Only after this change can any change in the world beyond ourselves occur. Hartshorne, therefore, concludes that the power relationship in which can be used as a basis for the analogy of God's power over the world is the mind-body analogy. While this may not be a perfect analogy, there is great similarity in one respect. God does not control the world except by the power of his will and his knowledge.¹⁹²

We are not, however, like God just because both he and we "know" and "will." Hartshorne agrees with traditional theology that God is not only like us in these respects but that he is infinitely unlike us. "He knows and wills eminenter, in a uniquely exalted fashion."¹⁹³ Where Hartshorne disagrees with traditional theology is that this dissimilarity must be pushed to the point of saying that God does not really know or will. This sort of pushing has completely dominated any discussion of God's having an eminent, perfect body probably because thinking never got beyond the features of a human body, and it was readily apparent that some of these were inapplicable to divinity.

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 179.

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 180.

One of the bodily characteristics which is not applicable to divinity is sense perception. All we know intimately is our thoughts, feelings, bodily states and their changes. The knowledge of everything outside ourselves is mediated to us by our sensory apparatus. From this it is correct to assume that the internal conditions of our bodies are more precisely experienced than external conditions surrounding our bodies. Take for example, vision. Through sense perception all we can be sure of is how an object appears to us. Since visual knowledge is mediated to us by the eye and optical nerves, we have no visual omniscience. Since God prehends all things directly, he does not need intermediaries and his perception is vivid and distinct. This is the source of his omniscience. Hartshorne explains the situation in this way:

God's volition is related to the world as though every object in it were to him a nerve-muscle, and his omniscience related to it as though every object were a muscle-nerve. A brain cell is for us, as it were, a nerve-muscle and a muscle-nerve in that its internal motions respond to our thoughts, and our thoughts to its motions. If there is a theological analogy, here is its locus. God has no separate sense organs or muscles because all parts of the world body directly perform both functions for him.¹⁹⁴

The continuing endurance of the cosmic body. Perhaps the strongest argument against conceiving God as having something analogous to a human body is that human bodies are composite, passive, mutable, and above all destructible. The first three of these characteristics can, according to Hartshorne, be predicted of God, but the final one cannot. That all other bodies which we know do undergo not only change but also death proves nothing about the divinely unique 'body' of God. If theologians were to treat the divine cosmic body according to the same principles

¹⁹⁴Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 185.

as they treat the idea of a divine, cosmic mind, there would be no objection at all to the concept of an indestructible body.¹⁹⁵

Bodies characteristically preserve themselves by generating new parts to replace those which disintegrate. To survive, a body's generation must at least keep pace with its disintegration. The human body and all bodies other than the cosmos itself are not able to sustain this pace and, therefore, suffer their eventual demise. The explanation for this is that no organism other than the cosmos itself could possibly have control over all other organisms. All non-cosmic organisms exist within an external environment and are subject to influences of other organisms outside their control. This environment inevitably at some point conflicts with the organisms internal needs. Destruction of the organism is due, therefore, to the influence of factors outside its control. If, however, we can speak of the cosmos as a "one-minded" organism having all its constituent organisms under the direct control of its mind, then we see that the destruction of the universe as a whole is impossible. Even though its component parts are subject to destruction, they are replaced by others and thus the whole is sustained.¹⁹⁶ Hartshorne elaborates:

Each new divine state harmonizes itself with its predecessors and with the previous state of the cosmos, somewhat as a man harmonizes himself in each new state with his previous experience and bodily state but with the decisive difference (among others) that the man must hope and may easily hope in vain that the internal and external environment will continue to make it possible for his bodily harmony to survive whereas with God there is no such problem.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵Ibid., p. 181.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., p. 182.

¹⁹⁷Hartshorne, Anselm's Discovery, op. cit., p. 293.

Since God has no external environment and his internal environment is under radical control, there is no possibility of the complete destruction of the cosmos. God needs only to continue adapting himself to the world with his supreme, unique skill and power to insure that there will be a unified cosmic structure. This guarantees that there will be a cosmos in some form or other.

Persuasion

One word of caution must be heard here. We have spoken of God as the order of the cosmos. The cosmic orderer must not be thought of as the cosmic dictator. Just as the mind does not have absolute control over the body, neither does God absolutely control the cosmos. The analogy of God's being a cosmic boss is "the most shockingly bad of all theological analogies," for this implies the use of overt power to achieve his will. He can, therefore, remain relatively impassive to the feelings of those under him. God does not function in this way. According to Hartshorne: "God is the monarch or king of all only through being in a real sense the slave, nay, the scourged slave, of all, infinitely more passive to others, more readily 'wounded,' even than anyone else can be."¹⁹⁸ If the cosmic mind, God, does not rule by force, then how does he direct and influence the cosmos? Hartshorne adopts Whitehead's view that the world is ruled by "persuasion." He says:

¹⁹⁸Ibid., p. 204. In the chapter where this quotation occurs, "Theological Analogies--Cosmic Organism" (pp. 174-212) a highly detailed understanding of this is given. The concept of "the cosmic mind" is also fully explored in Reality As A Social Process, "Elements of Truth in the Group-Mind Concepts," (pp. 53-68).

God can rule the world and order it, setting optimal limits for free action, by presenting himself as essential object, so characterized as to weigh the possibilities of response in the desired effect. This divine method of world control is called 'persuasion.'¹⁹⁹

We have already laid the foundations for understanding God's power over the world as the power of persuasion in our discussion of freedom. The freedom for self-creation is an essential aspect of an entity's experience of itself. No creature is simply inert or passive. If it were, it would not be. Therefore, there would be some resistance, however slight, to any attempt at exercising "absolute" control. The idea of power as the ability to control all things is an illusion since it arises from the mistaken notion that there is something which can be completely controlled. Since things cannot be coerced, the power that God has must be the power of influence. All entities have this power to a certain, limited extent in their superjective natures. This describes their ability to influence other entities by being data in their synthesis. Since God is the one who issues the initial aim for all entities, he is totally influential, not in the sense of determining all things but of influencing all things.²⁰⁰

It is possible to raise the question of creaturely freedom here and ask if the actual entity receives from God the initial aim which determines the original subjectivity of its prehension, how much self-causation is really involved? God's giving the initial aim does not deny, in any way, the entity's essential freedom. The initial aim is only

¹⁹⁹Hartshorne, The Divine Realitivity, op. cit., p. 142. Frequently, Hartshorne uses the word "influence" in place of "persuasion."

²⁰⁰Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. XVI.

initial. God is only providing a possible, albeit best possible, aim the entity could use for its becoming. The entity does not have to stick with it; it can deviate from the initial aim and establish its own aim which will govern the subjective form of the synthesis. Concerning this Whitehead says:

Thus, an originality (actual entity) in the temporal world is condition, though not determined, by an initial subjective aim (serving as its goal) supplied by the ground of all order and originality (God).²⁰¹

God's persuasive influence is felt by the world, as Hartshorne indicated earlier, first by setting "optimal limits" for the free creatures. This means that he established those conditions which are maximally favorable for each creature to enjoy rich, harmonious self-satisfactions. In setting these limits each creature's freedom will be maximized for the amount of freedom determines the depth of satisfaction possible. This is risky, for it implies that with the greater degree of freedom for self-creation is also the greater possibility of self-destruction. There is, however, an optimum setting of conditions which supply a degree of safety. This safety guarantees that the risks are not too great and, therefore, provides the maximum possible freedom. This limitation is the boundary within which a creature can make its own free decisions. It is a boundary that does not keep it safe from the possibility of all harm, but none the less does insure that it can and will achieve some value in its lifetime. The amount of freedom any creature is allowed is dependent on the extent that creature can, on its

²⁰¹Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 164. I am indebted to A. H. Johnson who supplied the clarifying information contained in the parenthesis. See his Whitehead's Theory of Reality, op. cit., p. 60.

own level, imitate the divine aim at harmony. Hartshorne believes that no creature is given more or less freedom than it can properly use.²⁰²

This power of persuasion is all the power God needs to have. It is the only power necessary for the divine orderer of the cosmos to contain. More power than this would trespass the legitimate freedom of other creatures. God's power is supremely adequate to do what should be done by a cosmic creator but not to do what should rightly be done by non-cosmic creators. God does not coerce the cosmos into the best possible state of existence. He creates the optimal conditions under which the best possible state could be achieved. There is no guarantee that this state will be achieved by various free creators. The result is usually not ideal because these creators are not as optimally good or wise as God is. The extent that the best possible state of the cosmos will be achieved depends on how influenced by the cosmic creator each non-cosmic creator allows himself to be.

This brings us to another important point. God's divine persuasion can only be effective if it does in fact have influence. In other words, the creatures must respond according to God's intention for them. The lure which God gives them in the initial aim must be sufficiently attractive that the creature will want to follow it. Already mentioned is the fact that the lure is the best possible satisfaction the creature can attain for itself personally and for the various social relationships of which it is part. This in itself should make it attractive to the creature. None the less, the creature is free to follow other lures which may appear more attractive to it. Still, in providing the initial

²⁰²Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., pp. 136 and xvii.

aim, God has started the creature off on the right foot, given him a push in the right direction, and this in itself gives a certain impetus toward fulfilling God's intention.

There is an additional argument here which Hartshorne mentioned earlier. God "presents himself as essential object so characterized as to weigh the possibilities of response in the desired effect." He continues:

. . . it is by molding himself that God molds us, by presenting at each moment a partly new ideal or order of preference which our unself-conscious awareness takes as object, and thus renders influential upon our entire activity. The total or concrete divine mover is self-moved. Only he who changes himself can control the changes in us by inspiring us with novel ideals for novel occasions. We take our cues for this moment by seeing, that is, feeling, what God as of this moment desiderates.²⁰³

As Whitehead says, "God's power is the worship he inspires."²⁰⁴

One further thing needs to be said about the attractiveness of God's lure. Process thought considers God to be most influential because he is most influenced. God orders the cosmos by taking into his own life all other life. Hartshorne believes:

In the depths of their hearts all creatures (even those who rebel against him) defer to God because they sense him as the one who alone is adequately moved by what moves them. He alone not only knows but feels (the only adequate knowledge where feeling is concerned) how they feel, and he finds his own joy in sharing their lives, lived according to their own free decisions, not fully anticipated by any detailed plan of his own.²⁰⁵

²⁰³Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 142.

²⁰⁴Whitehead, quoted by Hartshorne, Ibid., p. xvii.

²⁰⁵Ibid.

God as a Living Person

We have been discussing God in terms of his self-creation and his creation of others, using ideas like the relationship of mind to body to illuminate our thinking. We have also noted how he uses persuasion rather than coercion in dealing with his creatures and how his syntheses parallel ordinary syntheses but do so in uniquely supreme ways. We have now come to the point where we must ask a question which has not been finally answered by process thinkers. Is God an actual entity or is he a living person, that is a series of entities possessing a particular type of continuity?

Whitehead's view, which it is argued he does not hold consistently, is that God is an actual entity.²⁰⁶ Hartshorne rejects this view feeling that regarding God as a living person gives greater coherence to Whitehead's system than Whitehead's own view. He argues:

And here is one point at which Whitehead and I differ rather sharply. He says God is the supreme form of 'actual entity'; my view is, he is the supreme form of the category of 'personally ordered society' of actual entities. Technically, this difference is important. In thinking about God, Whitehead, it seems to me, fell into the trap . . . of taking continuity to apply literally to actuality. For Whitehead's God changes, while an actual entity, though it becomes, does not change. Hence, God must be a series, or society, of actual entities.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶Hartshorne, Philosophers Speak of God, op. cit., p. 274. Hartshorne points out this inconsistency in Whitehead's thinking. "God is, as Whitehead agreed in a carefully noted conversation with A. H. Johnson, a linear sequence (which Whitehead terms 'a personally ordered society') of occasions with the difference, as contrasted to ordinary personal sequences, that in God there is no lapse of memory, or loss of immediacy as to occasions already achieved."

²⁰⁷Hartshorne, "Comment by Professor Charles Hartshorne" in Peters, The Creative Advance, op. cit., p. 139.

John Cobb agrees with Hartshorne and points out that Whitehead wrote much of the time without having in his mind a clear concept of God as an actual entity and of what that implies. He points out that if one thinks of God solely in terms of his primordial nature, which Whitehead usually did, it would be correct to think of him as an actual entity because there would be no need to think of him as being temporal. When the consequent nature is taken into consideration, however, this is no longer possible. Cobb points out that Whitehead recognizes process in the consequent nature of God. He then elaborates:

Such process must be conceived either as the kind of process that occurs between occasions or as that kind which occurs within an occasion. Whitehead's position that God is an actual entity requires the latter doctrine. But the chief distinction between internal process and physical time is that the process occurring within an occasion has no efficacy for other occasions except indirectly through the satisfaction in which it eventuates. If the process in God's consequent nature is thought of in these terms, it cannot affect the events in the world. Yet, Whitehead explicitly affirms just such an influence.²⁰⁸

Another factor which must be taken into consideration when deciding whether God is an actual entity or living person lies in understanding the complete unity of the primordial and consequent nature in providing the initial aim for each new occasion of experience. God's casual efficacy in this case is that of an entity which has already attained satisfaction and not like one of the phases in the becoming of an entity. Looking at this from a slightly different angle, God could not provide an initial aim, in the way we have described his providing it, unless he had already completed the process of harmonizing all events into his one unitary experience. This means that a complete cycle of the creative

²⁰⁸ Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., p. 188.

process must be accomplished. Such would not be possible if God were an actual entity still in the process of becoming because he would not have obtained objective immortality which is necessary to exert the influence he does in fact exert on other occasions of creative experience.²⁰⁹

Hartshorne would have an additional reason for insisting that God is a living person. As we have seen, Cobb agrees with Whitehead that the initial aim involves eternal objects. Hartshorne rejects the concept of eternal objects opting for the creation of an original initial aim for each new occasion. This would be impossible if God were not a temporal series of entities for there would be no basis on which he could create an original aim.

Whitehead's main objection to seeing God as a living person would seem to be the loss of absolute self-identity through time and also the loss in vividness of past events.²¹⁰ While it is true that both these happen with ordinary living creatures, there is nothing that demands they happen. Hartshorne explains:

Any changing, enduring thing . . . has two aspects: the aspect of identity, or what is common to the thing in its earlier and later stages, and the aspect of novelty. A man is a new, different person every moment; but equally he is the same person every moment. There is no paradox in this. By change is meant exactly this combination of identity and difference. A being which changes only through a finite time has an identical aspect which changes only at the beginning and at the end of the stretch of time during which the thing endures A being which changes through all time has an identical aspect which changes at no time whatever, it is in this aspect immutable. Thus, there is a characteristic in God which is exempt from change.²¹¹

²⁰⁹Ibid.,

²¹⁰Whitehead maintains that society can maintain absolute self-identity. Complete self-identity from one entity to the next within the society is an "interesting fable." (Modes of Thought, op. cit., p. 129.)

²¹¹Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., pp. 107ff.

If we look on God as being not just a living person but the supreme exemplification of a living person, it is possible to posit that he does maintain an absolute self-identity through time and that the vividness of past experiences is not lost. Indeed, both of these are factors in his superiority. As concerns self-identity, Cobb points out that self-identity is attained by each living person's prehensions of the occasions that constitute his past. The living person would also, though, prehend some non-contiguous experiences of other living persons which would complicate his maintaining absolute self-identity. With God, though, there are no occasions which are not part of his past since every happening has already been included in his consequent nature. Hence, there is no loss of self-identity. Likewise, with regard to loss of vividness, this occurs because of the fragmentary way in which past occasions are retracted. This does not happen with God because he perfectly remembers in every new occasion all past occasions. His experience grows, but in this growth nothing is lost.²¹²

Although the question is still open for discussion, it seems more logical to conceive of God as a living person rather than an actual entity. Certainly, if one stays with Hartshorne, as we do in this dissertation, then it is impossible to do otherwise.

God and Creativity

Before drawing all that has been said together, one further clarification must be made. This concerns the relationship of God to creativity.

²¹²Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., pp. 190-91.

Whitehead's concept of creativity. Whitehead's initial account of creativity is "terse to the point of obscurity."²¹³ Looking at what he says is helpful, though, in locating its place in the system.

'Creativity,' 'many,' 'one,' are the ultimate notions involved in the meaning of the synonymous terms 'thing,' 'being,' 'entity.' These three notions complete the Category of the Ultimate and are presupposed in all special categories.

Creativity is the universal of universals characterizing ultimate matter of fact. It is that ultimate principle by which the many, which are the universe disjunctively, become the actual one occasion which is the universe conjunctively.²¹⁴

From the above quotations, it is obvious that creativity occupies a unique place in Whitehead's scheme. It is the ultimate notion. The terms "one" and "many" presuppose each other and refer to actual entities. Creativity describes the nature of all entities. "One" signifies the singularity of each actual entity; "many" the "disjunctive diversity out of which the one arises and to which it contributes itself."

Whitehead continues:

The novel entity is at once the togetherness of the 'many' which it finds, and also it is one among the disjunctive 'many' which it leaves, it is a novel entity, disjunctively among the many which it synthesizes. The many become one and are increased by one.²¹⁵

This last sentence, as we have already noted, is the key concept in process thought. The "many becoming one" presupposes creativity as the reason why it happens and that it happens.

²¹³Sherburn, A Key to Whitehead's Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 33.

²¹⁴Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 31.

²¹⁵Ibid.

Whitehead also calls creativity the "principle of novelty"²¹⁶ for production of novel togetherness is the ultimate notion of creative synthesis. The new entity is a different entity from any of those it unifies. Creativity is the fact of the emergence of this novelty. The "many" are in fact subordinate to the "one" so that it is unique in the universe, but the new one will be subordinate to another new one as that new one emerges. Whitehead says this constant movement from many to one and one to many is the "rhythm of process whereby creation produces natural pulsation, each pulsation forming a natural unit of historic fact."²¹⁷ This rhythm of process is unending repeating itself continually in the creative advance from creature to creature. Creativity is pure activity--the activity which is the basis of all reality.

Because creativity is an ultimate notion it is hard to define precisely. Whitehead finds he must appeal to our intuition for its intelligibility. He does, however, direct our thinking to Aristotle's ultimate category of "primary substance" which he says occupies the same place in Aristotle's system as creativity does in his own.²¹⁸ Equating primary substance with creativity is not what Whitehead has in mind, however. He notes a fundamental difference between primary substance and creativity being that the former is passive and the later active. What, he says, is similar is that each, in its respective system, is "the highest generality at the base of actuality." Both primary substance and creativity have "no character of their own" each relying

²¹⁶Ibid.

²¹⁷Whitehead, Modes of Thought, op. cit., p. 120.

²¹⁸Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 32.

on the actual world to receive their character. As far as creativity is concerned, Whitehead says, "The function of creatures is that they constitute the shifting character of creativity."²¹⁹

Primary substance does one other thing in Aristotle's system that Whitehead, at least implicitly, has creativity doing in his. Prime substance is the material cause of all things. It would, of course, be ridiculous to postulate a material cause in process theology where categories of substance have been replaced by categories of change. The material cause does though, answer for Aristotle the question of why there is anything at all, and Whitehead would have creativity be his answer to that question. Furthermore, in Aristotle the notion of primary substance insists that the role of the creator is to give form to a reality given him. This parallels what Whitehead sees actual entities doing to creativity. Although it is responsible for creation, creativity is not a creator because it is not an actual entity and only actual entities create.

In Aristotle prime substance is the explanation of why there are material things. It does not, however, provide any explanation for its own existence. Neither does creativity. It cannot be understood to exist because it does not fit into any of the categories of existence. It is not an eternal object because eternal objects are "forms of definiteness" and do not have to be actualized by any particular occasion. As Whitehead says, "an eternal object is neutral as to the fact of its

²¹⁹Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 46. I am indebted to John Cobb for calling this and the following comparisons between Aristotle and Whitehead to my attention. See his A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., pp. 206-9.

physical ingression in any particular actual entity."²²⁰ Still, creativity has no form of its own.

It might be possible to think of creativity as an abstraction from the process itself, but this is confusing. Cobb comments:

Creativity is the actuality of every actual entity. We may think of all the forms embodied in each instance of creativity as abstractable from it, since creativity might equally have taken any other form so far as its being creativity is concerned. But it is confusing to speak of creativity as being itself an abstraction from its expressions, since it is that in virtue of which they have concreteness. Nevertheless, creativity as such is not concrete or actual.²²¹

Whitehead obviously believes that the process of creation is unending or, at least, that it will continue "to the crack of doom,"²²² but he gives very little reasoning to support this belief. We can surmise, though, that one of the reasons he feels creativity will continue is the superjective nature of actual entities. Recall how we said earlier that the superjective nature of each entity was the urge it has to perpetuate itself by being included as datum in subsequent synthesis. To repeat what Whitehead says, "It belongs to the nature of a 'being' that is a potential for every 'becoming.'"²²³ Peters comments on this:

When we speak of data or objects provided by the past for unification in a present occasion, our words carry the misleading suggestion that the present occasion arises out of a

²²⁰Ibid., p. 70. Johnson believes 'creativity,' 'one,' and 'many' are eternal objects but 'ultimate' ones in that they must be actualized by every occasion. For the reasons given above, this conclusion cannot be accepted. See Johnson, Understanding Whitehead, op. cit., p. 71.

²²¹Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., p. 210.

²²²Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 347.

²²³Ibid., p. 33.

purely passive state of affairs. The truth is that each of these data actively compels its embodiment, its re-enaction, in the burgeoning occasion. It thrusts itself into the formation of the future and thereby acquires immortality.²²⁴

Peters concludes that the fact of past occasions propelling themselves into the future providing the data required for new entities, is creativity, for as Whitehead says, "the creativity of the world is the throbbing emotion of the past hurling itself into a new transcendent fact."²²⁵ The locus of creativity then for Whitehead must be in the superjective nature of actual entities.

Hartshorne's and Cobb's revision of Whitehead's concept of creativity. While it sounds very convincing to hear of entities aimed to and responsible for not only their present but also the future and that this provides a momentum which perpetuates the creative process, we still do not have much more than a description of the process itself. The question of why there is this unending creative advance is not adequately answered. Cobb comments:

Creativity is inescapably an aspect of every such entity, but it cannot answer the question as to why that entity, or any entity, occurs. The question is why new processes of creativity keep occurring and the answer to this cannot be simply because there was creativity in the preceding occasions and that there is creativity again in the new ones. If occasions ceased to occur, then there would be no creativity.²²⁶

Hartshorne and Cobb believe that the question can be answered only in strict adherence to Whitehead's ontological principle, that actual entities are the reasons for all things, and that if we want to

²²⁴Peters, The Creative Advance, op. cit., p. 59.

²²⁵Whitehead, Adventure of Ideas, op. cit., p. 227.

²²⁶Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit., p. 211.

know the why of something we must look to an actual entity or a society of entities for the answer. Cobb suggests, quite correctly, that we should look toward God. He points out that God's role in creation centers on giving each entity its initial aim. This is "the originating element in each new occasion."²²⁷ The giving of the initial aim is the most significant moment in the creative process because it is this decision which determines that the creative process for each individual entity will begin. God's supplying the initial aim provides the initiation of each occasion.

Although the initial aim comes along with the other data an entity receives, it is the most important datum for two reasons: (1) The initial aim determines the entity's standpoint in space-time. This means that the initial aim has determined what the entity's predecessors will be and, therefore, what other data will be available to it. This entity occurs at a particular time in a particular place because God decides it will happen then and there. (2) The initial aim is the entity's first subjectivity and determines at the outset how all other data will be objectified. This aim may, of course, be modified but it is the one with which the entity starts.²²⁸

The role of the initial aim is, therefore, different from that of other data in that it determines what other data will be "real potentialities" for the new emerging entity and also how this entity will initially react to that data. To put it slightly differently, God's

²²⁷Ibid., p. 205.

²²⁸Ibid.

initial aim is his decision that there will be the particular synthesis that will constitute an entity and, moreover, this involves the decision as to how that entity could and should conduct its own process of self-creation.

Again, we must remind ourselves that the initial aim does not determine the whole synthesis. It only determines what happens at its inception. Nonetheless, this is the crucial moment. In giving the initial aim God has decided that he wants an entity in a particular place at a particular time, and he has also decided what he wants that entity to become.

The initial aim and the superjective nature of God. The question could, and probably should, be asked, "Why does God give an initial subjective aim to each new occasion?" Stated in a slightly different way, "Why does he decide that there shall be a particular entity at a certain time and place with a specific potential for becoming?" The answer to these questions is found in the fact that God, in each of his momentary states of experience, has, like all other entities, a superjective nature.

Whitehead, Hartshorne, and Cobb say very little about the superjective nature of God. From what they do say it is apparent that, through the superjective nature, God shares with other entities the quality of having an urge to be formative of subsequent syntheses. God, through the superjective nature, thrusts himself into the future. This thrust manifests itself in the initial aim. Even though he does not describe it as such, what Whitehead sees happening in the fourth phase of the creative process, is precisely what is happening through the superjective nature.

This is the final stage of the process when the perfected actuality is passed back into the world as part of the actuality relevant to future experiences.²²⁹ John Lansing comments that the superjective nature of God is God's objective immortality. "We may speak of God," he says, "as superjective in that as a unified actual entity he is present to an immanent in the world luring it toward a greater intensity of experience."²³⁰ In Modes of Thought, again without specifically calling it the superjective nature, Whitehead says that in the final stage of the divine process of creation, "the issue is the unified composition which assures a datum operative in the future world."²³¹

This revision by Hartshorne and Cobb is a much stronger definition of God the creator than Whitehead would want us to have. Even though he sees God's role in the creative process as supplying the initial aims to each new entity, he does not see the initial aim as having so decisive a role as Cobb and Hartshorne do. He prefers to regard creativity as ultimate and to view both God and the world as conditioning it. He says, "Both God and the world are in the grip of the ultimate metaphysic ground, the creative advance into novelty."²³² Whitehead definitely wants to maintain that creativity is not dependent on God and that God is an instance of creativity just as all other entities are. There is no indication anywhere that he would want creativity to be seen as an expression of God's will and purpose. Yet, it

²²⁹See above, p. 164.

²³⁰Lansing, op. cit., p. 151.

²³¹Whitehead, Modes of Thought, op. cit., p. 128.

²³²Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 529.

seems this is where his thinking goes when followed out as has been done above.

God as Creativity Itself

Hartshorne suggests that in Whitehead's view creativity is "a sort of God beyond God."²³³ He insists that God cannot be conceived as a "mere product of creativity" but as its "supreme and indispensible aspect."²³⁴ He points out that:

All actual creativity is either God's own creative synthesis, or it is a datum for his creative-synthetic action. It is either a divine 'subjective form' or a divine 'objective form,' either a divine contribution to the creatures or a contribution divinely received from the creatures.²³⁵

All creativity is, therefore, in God either by being his own creative decisions or by including the creative decisions of others. When looking at God's own creative process and seeing that it includes all other creative processes, he concludes that divine process is "Process Itself." He says:

The consequent nature of God is a super process--inclusive of ordinary process, but only as these are its data, only as they are its objective forms. The subjective forms are different not in degree but in principle. 'God is not the world, but the valuation of the world.' This does not mean that the natural process goes on of itself and that God at most adds his evaluation, or merely originates the process Through his fresh valuation of each phase of process as it occurs, God is the continuing inspirer of order and stimulus to novelty of each subsequent phase On the other hand, the divine 'flux' contains the absolutely fixed structure and absolutely

²³³Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 18.

²³⁴Hartshorne, Anselm's Discovery, op. cit., p. 71.

²³⁵Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 138.

inexhaustible potentialities of the 'primordial nature.' The flux is, in sum, the Process which evokes, sustains, and processes ordinary process "236

Since God's creative synthesis is the supreme process and all other synthesis are included in it, Hartshorne feels God should be regarded as Creativity itself. He asks, "If in philosophies of being God is Being itself, in a philosophy of creativity, should he not be creativity itself?" He answers his own question by suggesting that "we regard creativity or the principle of process as an 'analogical concept' functioning in Whitehead's system somewhat as being functions in Aristotelian theology."²³⁷ He develops this idea by saying that according to Thomas Aquinas, for an example of an Aristotelian theologian, there are many different kinds of being with the major distinction being made between the necessary being of God and the contingent being of everything else. Likewise in Whitehead's system no simple identification is made of creativity with God's own creative process because each entity is at least partly self-created and, therefore, has its own creativity. In addition to this, just as in Thomism where divine being is held to exist necessarily and eternally, so in process thought does divine creativity necessarily and eternally exist. In its primordial aspect, divine creativity is the ground of all possibility and is thereby necessary because without it there could be no other creative synthesis. This is what distinguishes the divine creative process from other, contingent creative processes. He concludes that "creativity-as-such is no

²³⁶Hartshorne, "Tillich's Doctrine of God," op. cit., p. 169.

²³⁷Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 18.

more a God beyond God in this system than being-as-such is in Thomism. The difference is mainly in the shift from mere being to process as the ultimate analogical universal or form of forms."²³⁸

Clearly then, in Hartshorne's thinking, Creativity is not other than God but rather God is Creativity itself. Just as God is seen as the perfection of being in theologies of being, so he is seen as being the perfection of creative process in process theology. This does not deny any other entity its proper creativity and being independent of God. It does insist, however, that its creativity is derivative from and dependent on the divine creativity.

Hartshorne feels the reason why Whitehead never wished to draw the conclusion that divine creativity was Creativity itself is two fold. First, this identification could lead to the misunderstanding that creatures have no creativity of their own; and, secondly, it might then be possible to make God the one who chooses the particular goods and evils of the world. To avoid the determinism implicit in each of these, Whitehead chose to distinguish between God and creativity. Hartshorne believes that what Whitehead actually says about God cannot be reconciled with this separation. He says:

Since he [God] is active as well as passive, he can contain creative decisions he does not make. He contains his own divine decisions as making them and non-divine ones as suffering them God as adequate cosmic subject, correlative in a unique way to the total universe of lesser realities includes all instances and kinds of creativity either as his own act-forms or as their contents. Thus God is all in all, and this without prejudice to creaturely freedom and individuality.²³⁹

²³⁸Ibid.

²³⁹Ibid.

Thus, Whitehead, or anyone else, need not worry about a loss of genuine creaturely creativity when God is viewed as Creativity itself.

God as Creativity Which Creates Other Creativity

A helpful way of understanding Hartshorne's concept of God as Creativity itself is to look at the way John Macquarrie has handled the concept of being. Although there are many fundamental differences between the two theologians, one being Macquarrie's assertion the primacy of being over becoming and Hartshorne's the primacy of becoming over being, some of their thinking runs along parallel lines.²⁴⁰

Macquarrie, like Hartshorne, deplors a static concept of being. He insists that we approach the concept of being through "existence" rather than "thinghood." Being must be regarded as a "verbal noun" with a double meaning--both the "act or energy of existing" and also "the existent entity in which this act expresses or manifests itself." With this in mind he says the essence of being is the dynamic "letting be of other beings."²⁴¹ Furthermore, God is absolute letting-be. His essence is Being and his Being in turn is his letting-be.²⁴² Macquarrie points out that the Hebrew very hyh has more dynamic connotations than those expressed by its usual translation "to be." Its meaning is more adequately captured by "to become." The name of God, "I am what I am" is misleading, therefore, if it suggests only static being. Both Biblical thought and sound ontology demand a dynamic element in understanding

²⁴⁰ Macquarrie, Principles of Christian Theology, op. cit., p. 101; Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 13.

²⁴¹ Macquarrie, Principles of Christian Theology, op. cit., p. 99.

²⁴² Ibid., p. 183.

being. "I am what I am" should refer to the ongoing process of being or to being in time and history rather than just an immutable, static being. Significantly enough, he points out that a few biblical scholars translate the name of God as "I cause to be . . ." or "I bring to pass . . ." Even though this is not the preferred translation by most scholars, it does suit Macquarrie's purposes well for he can then translate God's name as being "I let be what I let be."²⁴³

God's Being, his letting-be, is prior to and the condition of the existence of any other being. He determines that it will have its being. The being of all creatures is subordinate to and dependent on his Being which lets them be.²⁴⁴ Without his letting them be, they could not be. This does not in any way suggest passivity. There is no inference here of leaving alone but rather one of enabling. Macquarrie says: "When we talk of letting-be, we are to understand both parts of the hyphenated expression in a strong sense--'letting' as 'empowering' and 'be' as enjoying the maximal range of being that is open to the particular being concerned."²⁴⁵

Macquarrie's concept of letting-be is very similar to Hartshorne's understanding of creativity. This closeness becomes apparent when Macquarrie says, "Letting-be is the creativity of Being, and the dependence of beings is their creatureliness."²⁴⁶ From Hartshorne's perspective, it is the Creativity of God which causes other instances of creativity,

²⁴³Ibid., p. 180.

²⁴⁴Ibid., p. 194-5.

²⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 310-11.

²⁴⁶Ibid., p. 145.

the actual entities, to happen. Their creativity, their becoming, is dependent on his creativity. He decides to let them become, to have their moment of self-creation. As in Macquarrie, this is not passive permission but an actual empowering to become, to enjoy the fullness of their own particular creative synthesis. In Macquarrie God may be thought of as the Being which lets being be. In Hartshorne, he is the Creativity which creates other creativity.²⁴⁷

The Logos as expressive Being and Creativity. Macquarrie makes a further differentiation in his concept of Being which can be usefully applied to understanding the process concept of Creativity. The Christian concept of the Trinity, Macquarrie says, safeguards the Biblical understanding of a dynamic God. Through God's self-revelation in the Trinity, we can see that there are three "movements" within the "dynamic yet stable mystery we call Being."²⁴⁸ He then describes the Trinity in

²⁴⁷We should note that while there is considerable agreement between the ideas of letting-be and creativity, there is also a certain incompatibility. The initial aim involves considerable specific content. Letting-be does not. God's pouring out of creativity, his giving of the initial aim is a function of the primordial nature. This initial aim is, however, more than just a creation of the primordial nature. As was established earlier, the content of the initial is dependent on what happens in the consequent aspect of God's creative synthesis. What is absent is Macquarrie's analysis of letting-be is any idea parallel to Hartshorne's understanding of the influence of God's consequent nature on his primordial nature. The particular content of the initial aim is dependent on the return of Creativity to its source and the further creative synthesis of the fruits of this creativity in the divine synthesis.

Concerning this, Overman comments that, "the notion of 'letting-be' captures part of what we mean by God's provision of initial aims, but it lacks the note of divine responsiveness to the past in terms of hopes for the future." Evolution and the Christian Doctrine of Creation, op. cit., p. 285.

²⁴⁸Macquarrie, Principles of Christian Theology, op. cit., p. 182.

this way: God the Father is "primordial Being," "the ultimate act or energy of letting-be, the condition that there should be anything whatsoever, the source not only of whatever is but of all possibilities of being."²⁴⁹ Primordial Being is the "depth of the mystery of God" whom we can only know through what he chooses to reveal of himself.

God the Son is "expressive Being." Through expressive Being the energy of primordial Being is poured out and gives rise to the particular beings of the world. Macquarrie reminds us that in Christian theology the Son is the Word or the Logos, the agent of the Father in both the creation and the recreation of the world. Therefore, he says "the Logos is expressive Being,"²⁵⁰ and it is through him that primordial Being is expressed in other beings. The Logos, or expressive Being, comes from the Father and is co-eternal with him. There never was a time when there was just primordial Being in splendid isolation. There has always been primordial Being united with and moving out through expressive Being.

God, the Spirit, is designated as "unitive Being." His operation is "to promote a new and higher level of unity between Being and the beings." Macquarrie explains:

. . . it is the function of the Spirit to maintain, strengthen and, where need be, restore the unity of Being with the beings, a unity which is constantly threatened. But the unity which the Spirit builds up is a higher unity than would have been possible had Being never moved out of primordial Being through expressive Being, for the new unity which the Spirit builds is a unity of freedom, a unity of comprehending a diversity of free responsible beings.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹Ibid.

²⁵⁰Ibid., p. 183.

²⁵¹Ibid., p. 184.

The Spirit then performs a unifying function drawing the beings to Being, for the Spirit "leads beings back up into a new and richer unity with Being which let them be in the first place."²⁵²

These three movements of Being present us with a description of divine Being which in many ways parallels the process understanding of divine Creativity, in particular the three natures of God.²⁵³ Primordial Being has a basic similarity to the primordial nature of God. Both are transcendent, eternal, God as he is in himself. Both are the ultimate potential for the universe and the source of all its possibilities. They are the condition that there be anything, and everything that is seen as being utterly dependent on them. Likewise, unitive Being, at least in its basic description, and the consequent nature of God are similar. It is in his consequent nature that God unifies all other creative experience in his own creative experience. The many become one. This is what Macquarrie sees happening in unitive Being when the diversity of free responsible beings is unified.²⁵⁴ Through unitive Being a level of unity is maintained among lesser beings and these lesser beings are related to Being itself. Through unitive Being, beings remain the possession of the Being which let them be. In the consequent nature of God, each entity is possessed by God becoming an eternal constituent of his divine self-creation.

²⁵²Ibid., p. 185.

²⁵³In no way is it claimed that there is an exact correlation. This does not mean, however, that Macquarrie's framework cannot be helpful for understanding process ideas.

²⁵⁴In Macquarrie's thinking this unity is not a constituent of divine being as it is in process thought.

The most important similarity, at least for our purposes, is the one between expressive Being and the superjective nature of God. Here, in both cases, we find the locus of the creation of other entities. Expressive Being and Creativity are, each in its respective system, the agency for the creation of other reality. Because of this, they are the way that the transcendent God becomes involved in the finite world. Both are, in fact, the immanence of God in the world which means they are more than just an agency but a real personal involvement--an incarnation--of God in creation. Through expressive Being, primordial Being pours out being to the other beings. Through his superjective nature, God, who is Creativity itself, gives each entity its creativity. In Macquarrie's thinking, expressive Being is identified with the traditional Christian concept of the Logos. This same identification can be made for Creativity in process thinking.

Cobb's understanding of the Logos. Cobb makes a different identification of the members of the Trinity than the one we have made above. While the two views are somewhat compatible, they differ sharply with regard to the nature of the Logos. A comparison between these views will help clarify the identification we have made of the Logos and Creativity. In so doing, we must note that Cobb insists that his position is not final and "very much in process" and that his proposals have the "character of tentative exploration . . . rather than well established conclusions."²⁵⁵

²⁵⁵John B. Cobb, Jr., Christ in a Pluralistic Age, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), p. 263.

For Cobb, the Trinity is "God, his Logos and his Kingdom. The Logos is present with us as Christ: the Kingdom as Spirit."²⁵⁶ The three members of this Trinity are not equal, the first person being more "ultimately God" than the other two. In spite of Nicaea and Constantinople, popular thinking within the church, Cobb believes, has always supported the idea that the Father was more fully God than the Son or the Spirit, both of which were seen as belonging to God and being derivative from him.²⁵⁷ This is also Cobb's view. The first person of the Trinity is simply God or God "in general." The other two members of the Trinity, Logos and Kingdom, are the two specific activities of God--his creative and his redemptive love. The Son is one mode of these activities, the Spirit the other. Cobb says that the relationship of the Son and the Spirit to God is like the relationship of Cobb's thoughts and feelings to himself. These thoughts and feelings have no existence apart from Cobb himself, and Cobb is the unity of these thoughts and feelings.²⁵⁸ Cobb likes the ancient image of the Trinity which depicts God as a man with two hands. The two hands belong to the deity but are not identical with the deity as a whole.²⁵⁹

Having established that the Trinity is composed of two persons plus the unity of those persons "which is not another person in the

²⁵⁶Ibid., p. 262.

²⁵⁷John B. Cobb, Jr. and David R. Griffin, Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), p. 110.

²⁵⁸Cobb, Christ in a Pluralistic Age, op. cit. pp. 260-1.

²⁵⁹Ibid., p. 259.

same sense that the other two are persons,"²⁶⁰ Cobb makes some additional differentiations. Each of the two persons in the Trinity has an immanent and a transcendent aspect. The Kingdom of Heaven and the consequent nature of God both refer to the same transcendent reality. The Spirit is the way in which the Kingdom is immanent in creation. The Logos and the primordial nature of God refer to the same transcendent reality, Christ is the way in which the Logos is immanent in creation. Cobb does not use the word "Son" here because it can mean both Logos and Christ. "The Logos refers primarily to the Son in his transcendence. Christ refers to the Son in his immanence or incarnation."²⁶¹

In spite of the fact that Cobb's view is in complete agreement with Whitehead's understanding of God, we have two problems with this understanding of the Trinity. The first is in terminology, particularly as concerns his use of the word "Logos." As indicated previously, the position taken in this paper does not identify the Logos with the primordial nature of God, but with the superjective nature of God. What Cobb calls the Logos is what we have called Creativity itself. What he calls Christ is what we have called the Logos or Creativity of God. We find confirmation that we are using different words for the same thing when Cobb refers to the Logos as "the source of novel order and ordered novelty,"²⁶² which is in

²⁶⁰Cobb and Griffin, Process Theology, op. cit., p. 109.

²⁶¹Cobb, Christ in a Pluralistic Age, op. cit., p. 261.

²⁶²Ibid., p. 229.

our thinking a function of Creativity itself. It is the Logos which supplies the initial aims for each synthesis. The outward movement of the Logos is Christ who becomes incarnate as these initial aims are prehended by the creatures. This movement, in our thinking, is the Logos.

The question that must now be asked is whether or not Cobb's classifications are superior to the ones presented previously in this paper. Our answer is that they are not.

Cobb believes that his concept of the Logos is Biblical and fundamentally what the church fathers meant by it. Aside from an oblique reference to John 1:4, no substantiation for this is offered.²⁶³ Our analysis throughout this paper has shown that the Logos, or the Word, is to be identified with that aspect of God which moves out into the creation and enters into relationship with the creatures. It would be impossible to read the prologue to John's gospel, to which Cobb refers, using his terminology, for there the Word (the Logos) is spoken of as being with God and being God's creative agent. The dynamic nature of the Logos is stressed. Likewise, no evidence is given nor can any be found, for the Bible's using the word "Christ" in the way Cobb does. While it is true that the Logos, or Word, is seen as being incarnate in Jesus Christ, the word "Christ" is used as a title for the historical person Jesus. S. E. Johnson points out that the word "Christ" means anointed. It is used in the Old Testament with reference to the anticipated messiah and in the

²⁶³Cobb, Christ in a Pluralistic Age, op. cit., p. 262.

New Testament it is "practically a surname" for Jesus, properly identifying him as the Messiah.²⁶⁴ Contrary to Cobb's usage, it would seem preferable to use the word "Christ" with reference to Jesus as the messiah, and the word "Logos" with reference to God's creative, redemptive self-expression.

Cobb definitely does not want to do this. As Griffin points out, Cobb, following a suggestion by William Beardslee, sees Christ as a "proposition." Griffin further notes that this is a fundamental shift in Cobb's emphasis, occurring around 1975, when his Christological concern became no longer how God is related to Jesus and the distinctive structure of Jesus' existence, but how the concept of Christ relates to the images of modern consciousness.²⁶⁵ For Cobb, Christ is "creative transformation"²⁶⁶ This is the image in art, literature, and theology to which the word "Christ" refers. Even though God or Jesus may not be named, the image of creative transformation indicates the presence of Christ. Christ is to be recognizable in all the creative movements of our time. Therefore, Christ is not fully contained by the Christian religion, but is also to be found in other religious traditions.

Our question here is: Is it fair to name the process of creative transformation "Christ?" We feel it is not. We prefer to keep "Christ"

²⁶⁴S. E. Johnson, "Christ," The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. A-D, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962) p. 563.

²⁶⁵David R. Griffin, "Post-Modern Theology for a New Christian Existence," in John Cobb's Theology in Process, David R. Griffin and Thomas J. J. Altizer, eds. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977), p. 21.

²⁶⁶Cobb, Christ in a Pluralistic Age, op. cit. This idea is discussed extensively in Chapters 1-4, pp. 31-95, of this book.

in its particular religious context and to let the word "Logos," which long before the emergence of Christianity had just the sort of universality Cobb wishes to convey by the word "Christ," stand for the concept of creative transformation.

Our second problem with Cobb's analysis is that he gives no attention at all to the superjective nature of God. We have identified God's superjective nature with the Word or Logos. In those places where Cobb discusses the Logos, no mention of the superjective nature is made. We cannot help but feel that were Cobb to give this concept adequate attention, he would find it providing a better framework for his thinking than the one he uses. What he calls Christ is, in fact, identical with God's superjective nature as we have explained it here. In distinguishing between the Logos and Christ, he is distinguishing between the primordial and the superjective aspects of God. Were Cobb to make this identification explicit, it would be possible for him to realize that process thought can accommodate something similar to the traditional doctrine of a three person Trinity. His present thinking excludes this, however. He comments:

The doctrine of the Trinity is an artificial game when much ado is made of the number three, and when the 'mystery' that God is somehow three in one, is portrayed as of special significance in itself, and even central to the Christian faith. Discussion of the various aspects of deity are meaningful only insofar as they help clarify experience in general and Christian experience in particular. Hence, process theology is not interested in formulating distinctions within God for the sake of conforming with traditional Trinitarian notions.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷Cobb, Process Thought, op. cit., p. 110. (Although this book is co-authored with David Griffin, the preface points out that Cobb is responsible for the chapter in which this quotation occurs.)

Such a distinction for the sake of conformity is not the motive for our identification of creativity and the Logos with the subjective nature of God. We did so to provide a more adequate explanation of the role creativity plays in the process framework than the ones given elsewhere. While we would agree with Cobb that the basic distinction within the personality of God is between the creative and responsive sides of divine love, God's primordial and consequent natures, we would go further and insist that the way in which this divine love becomes operative in creation or manifests itself as "creative transformation" is through the superjective nature of God which, from a Whiteheadian perspective, is creativity and from a Biblical perspective, is the Logos, the Word of God.

The reason for the creative process. We are now in the position to answer the question raised previously, "Why is there a creative process?" The answer to this is not as Whitehead supposed, that God and the world are both in the grasp of a metaphysical ultimate called creativity. Rather, God, who is Creativity itself, is the source and condition of the creative process. As we have seen, in his primordial aspect he is its beginning; in his consequent aspect, its end. Beyond this, in his superjective aspect with its drive toward the perpetuation of his own self-creation, the continuation of the creative process is assured. It is the nature of God to perpetuate himself and this he does through the creation of other entities. His process of self-creation insures their processes of self-creation. From his divine, unique, supreme creativity--Creativity itself, he gave them their appropriate forms of creativity. That creativity is drawn back into

the divine creativity only to be given out again in whatever manner he chooses. Creativity, as we have come to understand it, is God's expression of himself--an expression on which the continuous creation of the world depends.

The Process Concept of God the Creator

The most appropriate way of summarizing this chapter is to focus briefly on the concept of God the Creator as it has emerged in the preceeding pages. This concept is based on the process understanding that God is essentially creative. Nothing is more characteristic of him than this, for it describes the nature of how he is and how he acts.

Because God is dipolar, his creativity must be viewed from two perspectives. The first is his creation of himself. This is what takes place in his consequent nature. In each moment God is recreating himself as he performs his divine synthesis of all that is happening throughout the cosmos. Whatever transpires, whether trivial or significant, becomes part of the data out of which God creates his own experiences. God, in his consequent nature, loses nothing that takes place but takes all things into himself. This is not simple retention, however, for what is retained is also transformed. This transformation is determined by God's subjective aim which is to maximize the beauty and intensify the harmony found throughout the cosmos. The cosmos influences God, but it is not totally determinative of him. Out of what he is given, he creates his own experience of the moment which is his concrete actuality. This self-creation is the only creation for which he is finally responsible.

Even though fundamental, God's self-creation bears little relationship to what is generally thought to be the understanding of God the Creator. Whitehead certainly did not associate God's assimilation of the cosmos with the usual notions of creation, insisting instead that it should be viewed as salvation.²⁶⁸ We must, therefore, turn to the second perspective, which is gained by looking at the primordial aspect of God, to find a view that corresponds more closely to traditional views.

With regard to this perspective, what has been set out in this paper goes beyond what other process thinkers are saying concerning God's role in creating other entities. Whitehead, as we noted, is reluctant to give God a pre-eminent place in the creative process. God is one among the many entities which contribute data to other entities' concrescences. As far as Whitehead is concerned, God and all other entities are caught up in a metaphysical ultimate he called Creativity. Creation was the result of this principle's being operative throughout the cosmos. Creativity, not God, is the cosmic creator. Hartshorne and Cobb realize the importance of God's participation in the creative process, for it is he who supplies the initial aim to each entity thus providing its first moment of self-hood. It is this giving of the initial aim which actually brings about each entity's process of self-creative synthesis. Therefore, it is with God that we find the origin of creativity. Creativity is not something independent of him but rather something which issues from him. The creativity which permeates the cosmos is God's creativity.

²⁶⁸Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 526.

Even though God's Creativity may be described as creativity itself, God does not monopolize creativity. His creativity creates the creativity of others. The initial aim, which he gives, carries with it the enabling of each entity to begin its own creative synthesis. The initial aim represents the divine decision that an entity will have its moment of becoming. The aim not only permits this to take place but it also points the entity toward an actualization which would be the best for it and for all other entities. This actualization is only a possibility, however. God does not force its realization. The creativity he creates is genuine because it is free. Other entities possess the freedom to create themselves just as God does. In being a cosmic creation, God is not a cosmic dictator. While it is true that he limits freedom so that the cosmos will not collapse into chaos, the limits he imposes are broad enough to guarantee proper creaturely freedom.

In traditional thinking, God expresses himself through his Logos. We have come to see that in process thinking, this self-expression is accomplished through Creativity. This Creativity is God's superjective nature. It is this conclusion which has taken us beyond what other process thinkers are saying. Even though Whitehead insists that every entity be regarded as subject-superject, he and those who follow him, give scant attention to God's superjective nature. Yet, it is here that we can locate God's creative urge, for it is through the superjective nature that God moves out into creation. It is the bridge between the primordial and consequent natures. It represents the divine involvement in each entity's self-creative process.

Because of this identification, process thinking can put forward a strong concept of God the Creator. God is responsible for the cosmic process. Without him there would be no creation. He is Creativity itself. His creativity is that which creates the creativity of others.

Seeing that there is a strong doctrine of God the Creator in process thought, we can now turn to a comparison of this concept with the traditional concepts we discussed previously.

Chapter 3

THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION

THE PROCESS AND CONCEPT OF CREATION

John Cobb suggests that Whiteheadian thinking has many points of contact with traditional Christian thought--more than either Whitehead or his critics would generally recognize. Nonetheless, process thinking is profoundly new, and it is this newness which most impresses observers. He continues by saying:

After generations in which theologians and religious philosophers have struggled to defend some one relation in which God's importance for the world can be argued, we are confronted with a new world of thought in which all manner of modes of relatedness to God are affirmed. Within the Whiteheadian context we can understand both the person-to-person encounter of modern Protestantism and the mysticisms of both East and West. We can agree with those who have seen the relation of man to God in the ethical dimension and with those who have reasoned to God from the order and directionality of nature. We can see both the reality and the all-determinativeness of God and also the freedom and responsibility of man. But we can see all this in a frame of reference that to some degree transforms the meanings of all the traditional terms and problems.¹

In this chapter, as the traditional understandings of the doctrine of creation and the process concept of creation are juxtaposed, we shall see just how extensive this transformation in meaning is.

¹John B. Cobb, Jr., "From Crisis Theology to the Post-Modern World," in Radical Theology: Phase Two, ed. by C. W. Christian and Glenn R. Wittig (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1967), p. 201.

Throughout our discussion we will question whether or not process thought provides an adequate articulation of the doctrine of creation. We will see if it can make the same affirmations concerning the relationship of God and the world as have proved essential in the past and whether or not it provides a viable way of speaking of God the Creator within a Christian context.

To begin doing this we must start by examining in the light of process thought the two notions which have proved to be the most enduring expressions of the doctrine of creation--creatio ex nihilo and creatio per verbum.

PROCESS THEOLOGY, CREATIO EX NIHILO, AND CREATIO PER VERBUM

Process Theology and Creatio ex Nihilo

Process thinkers, Hartshorne in particular, have little good to say about the idea of creatio ex nihilo. Hartshorne says it is a "mischievously unclear way of talking which may have squeezed out more truth and introduced some error." Further, it is a "man-made mystery, . . . a stylized version of Biblical thought, a version invented by philosophical theology. The invention need not be taken as sacred."² It is at best "a dubious interpretation of an obscure parable."³ Cobb would second Hartshorne's sentiments saying, "There is no reason to suppose that the world came into being out of nothing The fact that theologians once thought this way is no reason to think so now."⁴

²Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., pp. 10-12.

³Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 30.

⁴Cobb, God and World, op. cit., p. 91.

We have already heard others making similar, although perhaps not quite such emphatic, criticisms of the notion of creatio ex nihilo. Earlier, we noted both the lack of agreement as to whether it was actually the teaching of scripture and its questionable intelligibility.⁵ While Hartshorne obviously does not read the doctrine of creatio ex nihilo in the Bible, insisting that Genesis does not demand this understanding of its account of creation, he is not primarily interested in exegesis. Of greater importance to him than the Biblical basis of the doctrine is its intelligibility.

The intelligibility of creatio ex nihilo. Creation out of nothing must be emphatically denied, Hartshorne believes, if it means that there is no relationship at all between divine and non-divine forms of creativity. Such a relationship does exist for creative synthesis is a universal category and describes all actuality from the divine process to the molecular. The essence of all reality is the self-creative synthesis. Everything which is, exemplifies it.

Against those who use creatio ex nihilo as a way of denying any attempt at conceptualizing the mystery of God's creative act, Hartshorne insists that we can, by the reformed subjectivist principle, conceptualize God's creative act in the same way we do our own. God's creating out of nothing is meaningless because it has no possible reference to what is meant by the word "create." All creation is creation out of something--taking what is there and making it into what is here. This "something" is the antecedent events of an entity's tradition. No act of creation can take place without this since an entity's self-creation depends on and

⁵See above, pages 14-15.

is limited by the data it receives. Nowhere is there a possibility of an entity's generating its own data. This, as we said, applies to God as well as to other creatures. He creates his own momentary, concrete experiences out of the data he receives which is the sum total of all creative experience in the cosmos. God simply does not create out of nothing. To say he does would deny any meaning to the word "create" which could be analogous to other creative experience.⁶

Looking at this from the process perspective, the principle of "causal efficacy" is denied by creatio ex nihilo. Data are influential though not determinative of, an entity's becoming. To deny causal efficacy with reference to God, would mean that there is nothing that influences him. This is, of course, something on which some traditional thought insists. It insists that God is impassive, incapable of being influenced. Process thought, as we noted, rejects divine impassivity postulating instead a God who is supremely passive--that is, influenced by all entities, not just some entities. It is on the basis of this influence that God creates himself and then influences, or has causal efficacy for, the creation. Without the influence God receives from the world, he could not create an initial subjective aim for each creature because he would be denied the basis on which he could decide what would be the best satisfaction this entity could attain with reference to itself and to the totality of the cosmos.

There is, and must be, according to process thinking, a certain agreement in the use of the word "create" or else we would be talking

⁶Hartshorne presents this argument in almost identical form in three places: Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., pp. 192-94; Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., pp. 10-11; and Man's Vision of God, op. cit., pp. 230-31.

nonsense when we say both God and man create. If there is not a basic agreement of meaning in both cases, the word would be meaningless when applied to one or the other. We cannot say the term belongs exclusively to man, God, or anything else. Everything literally creates in that everything exemplifies the creative-synthetic model. This model can be applied analogically to all reality.⁷ To say that God's creative act does not correspond to this model but is instead ex nihilo is, from the process perspective, unintelligible.

To say that everything exemplifies creative synthesis in its becoming is not to say that all syntheses are identical. Each entity will exemplify creative synthesis in its own unique way. Hartshorne says, "God has divine self-creativity . . . , human beings have the human form of self-creativity, dogs have the doggish form, amoebae the amoebic form, atoms the atomic form."⁸ While some degree of creativity must be applicable to all reality, careful distinction must be made between supreme creativity and lesser forms. As we have seen, God, who is creativity itself, has the highest form of creative synthesis. His exemplification of creativity is perfect and complete. It is absolutely unsurpassable by any other form of reality, and therefore, unique. All other forms of creative synthesis share the characteristic of being imperfect and partial. God creates "the whole world," other entities create only very small parts of the world. God has unlimited influence in his

⁷ Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 194; and A Natural Theology for Our Time, op. cit., p. 26. The analogical status of creativity is discussed in the last chapter to this dissertation.

⁸ Hartshorne, "Comment by Professor Hartshorne," in Peter's, The Creative Advance, op. cit., p. 137.

creativity; other entities have very little. God's creativity is eternal; other entities create for a very brief period of time. A fundamental distinction, then, between God and other creators is in the totality of his creativity and the partiality of theirs.⁹

Another fundamental difference is that the creativity of other entities is derived from the divine process. The divine process is derived from nothing but itself, which includes all other processes. There are, therefore, radical differences between the divine and non-divine creative acts, but both are genuinely creative. God and all other entities can be called creators, and the word will carry a clear, precise meaning.

The preferability of comparing God's creative act with those of other creatures to creatio ex nihilo. Hartshorne feels that understanding God as the supreme, unsurpassable instance of creativity exalts him more than contending there is no similarity between his creativity and the creativity of others, which is what is often implied by creatio ex nihilo. Can we talk of a supreme creator when there are no other creators with whom he can be compared? Comparison demands similarity. If there are no common aspects, there are no definite contrasts either.¹⁰ Even when we compare the proverbial apples and oranges, we are still talking about fruit. To say God is the "supreme" or "ultimate" or "perfect" anything, there must be instances which are not supreme, ultimate, or

⁹Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 193.

¹⁰Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 139.

perfect. If God and other entities are not genuinely creators, we cannot contrast their creativity and, thereby, see the superiority of God's creativity. Hartshorne comments:

To say 'only God literally creates' is not to exalt God in any definite way. For you might as well say, 'only God dubbubs' To say . . . 'only creatures literally exist' is again not to exalt God in any definite way--unless another word, perhaps 'being,' is introduced for God which does apply to creatures as well, and this will only repeat the problem.¹¹

Since the words create and creator have a consistent, common meaning, their intelligibility is not problematic in process speaking as it is when one speaks of creatio ex nihilo. Hartshorne believes that attributing to God the super-eminent form of creativity establishes a theological analogy which is free from arbitrariness and contradiction.¹²

Creation as response to stimulus. Creativity is clear and unambiguous in process thought because we may speak of any entity's creation as its experience of self-creation through the synthesis of the data it receives. Likewise, we can speak of an entity being a creator because it is part of the data used in another entity's synthesis. Another way of looking at this is to see creation as a response to stimuli. Being the creator of another is being a stimulus for that other's response. God's creativity is the super-eminent form of creativity. By providing the initial aim to all other creatures, he is a stimulus for every response. By including everything in his own process of self-creation, he responds to all stimuli. God's creating of others is the

¹¹Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 140.

¹²Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 124.

highest form of stimulating response; his own self-creation is the highest form of responding to stimuli.

Put this way, it is clear that there is a fundamental conflict between process thought and the idea of creatio ex nihilo for creatio ex nihilo has been used to challenge ideas similar to this. Scholastic metaphysics did allow that God was the "first cause" and would, therefore, be able to tolerate, but probably not embrace, the process understanding of God's causation of other entities. Orthodox protestantism, which rebelled against the scholastic model, would not be able to do this. God could not be considered a cause, because the concepts of causality, drawn as they are from the human or natural spheres of creation, cannot apply to God. He must not be thought a cause among others-- not even the supreme or first cause.

Neither scholasticism nor protestantism could tolerate the process idea of God's responding to stimuli, for saying that creation is a response to stimuli seems tantamount to saying there is "something" outside of God himself which God uses in his creative act. This contradicts the basic meaning of creation out of nothing. We need, therefore, to look at this point closely.

God's creation of the world out of his synthesis of the world, not out of nothing. What God creates the world out of is the preceeding phase of the world. God, in his consequent nature, creates himself by prehending all immediately temporally prior actuality into himself. His creating involves more than that, however. That from which God creates the world is not the world in its preceeding phase, but the world in its preceeding phase as it has been transformed by him. God, therefore,

creates the world out of his own creative synthesis of the world, which is his consequent nature. The perfected actuality of the consequent nature is the basis for the initial aim, God's creative act, for other entities. Hartshorne, after noting that God does create out of a given concrete actuality like other entities do, says that what distinguishes God's creativity from others' is that this concrete actuality, the preceeding phase of the world, was itself created by God. He continues:

God . . . unlike us, is never confronted by a world whose coming to be antedates his own creaturely existence. There is no presupposed 'stuff' alien to God's creative work; but rather everything that influences God has already been influenced by him, whereas we are influenced by events of the past with which we had nothing to do.¹³

Process thought, then, speaks of all creation, God's included, as being creation out of something. Only with reference to a supposed first moment of creation could there be any other type of creation.¹⁴ Certainly, all of God's present creative activity is creation based on a previous state of the world. By way of illustration Hartshorne asks:

Does God create an adult out of nothing or out of a child? The creative functioning of deity involved in the production of Beethoven's music certainly did not treat as nothing the free self-decisions of Beethoven's predecessors in composition.¹⁵

When God creates, he does so on the basis of his previous creating. Hartshorne, then, suggests that if one insists on retaining the idea of creatio ex nihilo, it "may only be taken as an elliptical way of stating that the divine action presupposes nothing anterior to God himself."¹⁶

¹³Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 30.

¹⁴The question of a first moment of creation is discussed on pages 84-86.

¹⁵Hartshorne, Philosophers Speak of God, op. cit., p. 23.

¹⁶Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 194.

He goes into this in some detail:

. . . the total concrete cause of this world is not merely the divine essence; rather, it is God as having actually created and now possessing all previous worlds. On the assumption one may, in a sense, say that God creates us 'out of nothing' . . . thus, the other-than-ourselves-now which creates us, as of now, is God and in addition to God, nothing. Or past, which, . . . is required material for our present self-creation, is already included in God's receptive valuation, just as our present is about to be, or is in process of being, included. God, then, is the whole creative source; but not God as First Cause, or as 'absolute' source; rather, God as the ever-new ideal summation of the already created.¹⁷

It is worth noting that Hartshorne's criticism of God's alleged creating out of nothing is paralleled by an attack on the idea of man's creating out of matter. This concept is far too simplistic a way of viewing human creation. He says:

Both the statement that man creates only by modifying a given material and the statement God's creation presupposes nothing but the divine power are alike found unacceptable as they stand. The notion that a new experience or event is merely a new predicate of a material already there is confused Human creating makes use of, or profits by, antecedent events. If, and only if, such and such has already happened, can certain human acts happen. This is what we know positively. The final actualities are events, and the events we know vividly are those constituted by occasions of human experience. If, then, Beethoven had power in part to determine his own musical experiences, insofar he had power to create not mere adjective of some actuality but actualities themselves.¹⁸

What Hartshorne is guarding in this passage is the novelty and freedom that are part of each synthesis. Creation out of matter in no way demands these as being included in the process. Creation out of previous experience does, for it is more than just shaping the materials one has on hand. New events require, or are built out of, existing materials,

¹⁷Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, op. cit., p. 273.

¹⁸Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 193.

but they are more than just these materials acquiring new qualities. They have some qualities of older entities and some novel ones; therefore, they are unique. The emerging of a new, unique entity through creative synthesis is the true meaning of creation.¹⁹

Another problem Hartshorne has with creatio ex nihilo is that it implies coercion in creation. God does exactly what he wants without needing the cooperation of the creature. Process thought stresses repeatedly that in all his dealings with his creatures, God chooses to persuade rather than coerce. In creation, the creature's freedom is guaranteed. God gave the creatures this freedom and does not usurp it. Nowhere does creatio ex nihilo suggest that the creature has freedom for self-creation. Because of this, Hartshorne requests that the image of God's creating by divine persuasion be substituted for God's creating out of nothing.²⁰

By now, it should be obvious that it would be impossible to effect a reconciliation between process thought and the notion of creatio ex nihilo. Even though it has had a venerable history, creation out of nothing cannot be an adequate tool for expressing the process understanding of divine creation. Divine creation must be understood as the super-eminent form of creative synthesis.

As we conclude that process theology rejects creatio ex nihilo, we must remind ourselves that creatio ex nihilo was originally formulated to refute heresies which had crept into the early church. What we must

¹⁹Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 193.

²⁰Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 142.

do now, then, is to see if process thought affirms anything which creatio ex nihilo sought to deny.

Process thought and ancient dualisms. Process thought is not a modern representation of the ancient dualisms which originally forced the church to formulate the notion of creatio ex nihilo. Certainly, there is nothing here similar to Timaeus' idea of God working with alien, recalcitrant matter. In no way is God's consequent nature alien to him! Granted, the consequent nature has been influenced by things which are not God himself--the free self-creative entities which are the products of his own creativity. These, however, have only partially influenced and are not completely determinative of the consequent nature. God has freely unified them in his own self-creative experience of becoming. The consequent nature, out of which God creates, is not the world but transcends the world because it has transformed the world. Furthermore, these entities which influence God's consequent nature were first influenced by him in the moment of their becoming as he gave them their initial aim. What God creates out of, is not alien to himself and cannot be called recalcitrant since God himself has transformed it.²¹

Another difference between process thought and the Timaeus is that the material which God uses in his creation are dynamic events with their own unique characteristics; they are not a formless mass waiting to be shaped. They have already created themselves.

²¹Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 116. Hartshorne says that the issue of recalcitrance in process thought is just "the familiar difficulty of eliciting harmony among a plurality of creatures each having its own freedom which is never fully determined by antecedents, including its own past nature."

A third important difference is that God, unlike the Demiurge in the Timaeus, does not force his creation into being what it becomes. Process thought emphasizes self-creation, and the only creative acts for which God is entirely responsible are his own continuous acts of self-creation. He creates other entities only as he influences them. He does not shape anything into what he wants it to be by any method other than persuasion. Clearly, the creator God of process theology is not the Demiurge of the Timaeus.

This is a good place to point out that process theologians are no more willing to use "the potter making a pot" as a model for God's creativity than are traditional theologians. Hartshorne finds this an inadequate and misleading image. To conceive of God working over a lump of clay to form his creatures is "poetically picturesque but not religiously or philosophically helpful."²² What Hartshorne finds particularly disagreeable in this image is what we have already mentioned repeatedly--it suggests coercion rather than persuasion as the way in which God creates. The idea of God forcing his creation to conform to his design and desire does not accurately represent the concept of the divine creativity. According to Hartshorne, there must be no concept of pushing around passive clay or pulling a puppet's strings as a model of how God works with the world. Furthermore, God must never be thought of as using brutal punishment or irresistible bribes to achieve what he wants. Hartshorne continues:

All that God can directly give us is the beauty of his ideal for us, an ideal to which we cannot simply not respond, but to

²²Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 194.

which our response has to be partly self-determined, and it has to be influenced by past creaturely responses in our universe. 'Persuasion' is the ultimate power; not even God can simply coerce.²³

Just as process thought is dissimilar to the thought of the Timaeus, it is also dissimilar to the Valentinian Gnosticism which so infuriated Irenaeus. In process thought we do not have two realms of reality--one immortal and the other material--with the material realm having been generated out of a fallen spiritual being. Further, the world is not created by a demiurge, but by God himself. As we have noted, there is a duality, but not a dualism, in process thought. This duality refers to God's primordial and consequent natures, not to two separate realms of reality. Only if we were to split God by separating these two halves of his one reality, would there be the possibility of separate realities. This separating, as we have said before, can only be done for purposes of analysis. Although it is unlikely that Irenaeus ever entertained the idea of a dually transcendent God such as the one described by process thought, he does speak of God's containing all things and commanding them into existence.²⁴ Were he our contemporary, he might not be as offended by process thought as he was by Gnosticism.

Process thought and a first moment of creation. Before we close our discussion of process thought and creatio ex nihilo we need to look at one further matter. Much of the talk about creation out of nothing implies a first moment of creation. The question must be asked of process

²³Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., pp. 239-40.

²⁴See above, page 11.

thinkers, "Was there ever a first state of creation--a time when God had nothing out of which to create?" This question from the process point of view is the same as asking, "Was there ever a time when God was only the primordial nature without the consequent nature?" The answer to this is an obvious and emphatic "no." The primordial and the consequent natures are two aspects of the one God. Therefore, conceiving of a time when there was not a cosmos is impossible--as impossible as conceiving of a time when there was not God or a time when there was only half of God. According to Griffin, "that there be an actual world of some sort or other is not a contingent matter. There would simply be no meaning to 'God' apart from 'creativity' and the worldly 'creatures.'"²⁵

Hartshorne feels that the idea of "the beginning of time: when things could have been created ex nihilo is self-contradictory. The reason for this is "even a beginning is a change, and all change requires something changing that does not come to exist through that same change."²⁶ Because of this, the beginning of the cosmos would have to be an event in the life of something other than the cosmos. God himself is the only possible subject for such a change. In his primordial nature he is self-identical, but in his consequent nature he is ever-changing.

The argument could be made, however, that the beginning of the cosmos was not a change in anything anterior to it. There need not be a subject of the change. There is still, though, the factor that it

²⁵David R. Griffen, God, Power, and Evil: A Process Theodicy, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), p. 279.

²⁶Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 233.

would have to be the actualization of some possibility which, as not separated from it in time, would have to co-exist with the actuality.²⁷

Hartshorne further asks what a first state of the cosmos could possibly have been like. It would have nothing in common with later states for it would lack memory and would not be the achievement of any antecedent purpose. Hartshorne is fond of citing the dilemma of Edmund Gosse's father who wondered for years what the first state of the world would have been like and finally "solved" the dilemma by saying that God had to create a first state that did not appear to be a first state. Did Adam have a navel? If so, did not this point to a mother? If not, was he really a man? Gosse's father's answer was God had to create Adam with a navel so that he resembled the men who would follow him.²⁸ This is for Hartshorne the reductio ad absurdum of the notion of a first state of creation.

As an alternative to the idea of a first state of creation, Hartshorne suggests an "infinite regress of past events." Although we could not possibly imagine what this would be, the idea is not self-contradictory. We can think of the present state of the cosmos as arising out of the immediate previous one and so forth ad infinitum. The idea of God creating this world out of a previous one which was created out of a previous one, et cetera, is open to no objections other than those supposedly derived from revelation.²⁹ Hartshorne regards this as

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 232, and Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 194.

²⁹Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 232.

compatible with the accounts in Genesis. God's creating the present world, "consisted in the transformation, as radical as you please, given time enough, of an earlier, to us unimaginable, nature which itself may have been similarly produced out of a still earlier state of things."³⁰ Overman puts this in the context of God's own perpetual self-creation and says:

God may be understood as enjoying an infinite succession of divine moments of experience, each one complete and satisfied. Because of God's aim to perpetuate his personality, and his ability to do so by initiating new occasions, his existence will be without end; likewise, if we look backward, we discover that each divine occasion in turn has received its existence from earlier ones so that we fail completely in trying to imagine a beginning of the series.³¹

We do not need to dwell on this longer, for as we saw earlier, many contemporary thinkers, even those who find some validity in the idea of creatio ex nihilo, have moved away from defending the idea of a beginning in time pointing out that this is not the crucial issue as far as doctrine of creation is concerned.³²

Creation out of chaos not out of nothing. In the first chapter we noted that some Biblical scholars find the teaching of Genesis to be creation out of chaos rather than creation out of nothing.³³ Process thought is strikingly compatible with this point of view. Whitehead,

³⁰Ibid., p. 94.

³¹Overman, Evaluation and the Christian Doctrine of Creation, op. cit., p. 276.

³²cf. Mascal, Christian Theology and Natural Science, op. cit., p. 132, and Macquarrie, Principles of Christian Theology, op. cit., p. 199.

³³See above, pages 12-13.

for instance, specifically rejects "the beginning of matter of fact" in favor of the creation of order out of chaos.³⁴

We saw in Chapter Two how God is the cosmic orderer. He limits the chaotic potential of the cosmos, and this limitation creates the order which is necessary for maintaining the cosmos.³⁵ He supplies this order in two ways. First, in each moment of his self-creation, he creates a harmonious world out of the discordant one that he is given. The freedom each entity has to introduce novelty in its own self-creation means that disorder inevitably accompanies the creative process. The conflicts created by this disorder are reconciled in God's consequent nature. Second, the radical diversity of the cosmos means that chaos would always be a possibility were it not for God's limiting its chaotic potential. This he does through the giving of the initial aim which points each entity toward the best internal and external harmony it would be possible for that entity to achieve. Complete harmony is not attained, but self-destructive chaos is averted.

Creation out of chaos, of course, is usually used with reference to a primeval event when order was first imposed on disorder. Process thought, as we just noted, does not look back to any first moment of creation but rather sees the emergence of an ordered universe from disorderliness as being part of the ongoing process of creation. There never was a beginning of some form of cosmic structure, but this need not suggest that the cosmic structure we now have is the only one that has ever been. Some cosmic structure is necessary; a particular cosmic structure is contingent.

³⁴Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., pp. 146-47, 519.

³⁵See above, pages 147-48.

Whitehead postulates that there has been a series of cosmic epochs each reflecting a particular form of order. These forms of order have come into being gradually, existed for a period of time and, then, gradually dissolved as new forms have come to take their place.³⁶ The dissolution of order is accompanied by an increase in chaos, and, hence, the creation of the world or of any social structure can be seen as creation out of chaos. Chaotic potential is always there. Sometimes it is more fully realized than others, but still God's creative act continuously rescues the creation from lapsing into utter or absolute chaos.³⁷

In a state of utter chaos, there would be no social order at all. Entities would not be able to form themselves into even the most elementary societies. There could be no enduring objects since even a serial order of actual entities would be impossible. A certain amount of order is obligatory for any society no matter how primitive. The more complex a society, the more order is required. As Whitehead says, "In proportion to the chaos there is triviality."³⁸ A highly complex society such as a living person requires a highly ordered environment.

Griffin says we can look on the emergence of the various social structures as reflecting the cosmic epochs. There has always been a thrust toward the future which would involve the emergence of entities capable of a greater intensity of feeling. As we noted, in every

³⁶Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 142.

³⁷Griffin, who provides an excellent analysis of the various cosmic epochs of the world, says that we should view the world as having been created at each of the epochs out of a nearly chaotic situation. One form of order does not succeed another without first passing through a time of comparatively strong disorder. See, God, Power, and Evil, op. cit., pp. 286ff.

³⁸Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 169.

subjective aim there is the twofold thrust of maximum enjoyment of the present experience of concrescence and of contributing to the maximum enjoyment of future entities. Griffin suggests that:

This twofold aim also characterizes the divine aim in bringing forth each step in the evolutionary process. That is, each breakthrough makes possible a greater enjoyment of experience in the present. It also provides the necessary conditions for the emergence of a more complete form of actuality in the future,³⁹ which will be capable of ever greater intrinsic good.

He illustrates this by showing that the emergence of the atom out of enduring individuals at the level of protons, neutrons, and electrons enabled a gain to be made in the achievement of intrinsic value.

"These atomic occasions are able to harmonize a greater variety of the available data than are any of the subatomic occasions. Hence, a more intense harmony is possible."⁴⁰ The same is true in the advance from the molecular to the atomic, from atoms to cells. This advance being most crucially important because cells are the first living occasions.

In postulating that the cosmos had been and is being led from one level of order to a higher one so that more complex creatures could emerge, process thought is identifying itself with evolutionary theory. God has consistently lured his creation into more ordered and, therefore, more complex states of being. There has been a gradual movement upwards but this has not been without setbacks. These only confirm the freedom of the creature to follow or ignore God's lead. The lapses which do occur come from the entities' failure to achieve that harmony and intensity of feeling which is possible within the order given them in

³⁹Griffin, God, Power and Evil, op. cit., p. 287.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 288.

their receiving of their initial aims. To see that there has been an upward trend in cosmos reflecting a divine purpose, requires a broad look at cosmic history. Such a look reveals that the divine subjective aim has guided each step in the evolutionary process. This guiding has always been toward a specific ideal possibility embodying the maximum value which God judges to be possible for it in light of its heritage and its future. Because of this, the evolution of the cosmos can be understood as an open-ended, historical process "characterized by novel responses to settled situations."⁴¹

Drawing this together, we can only reiterate the incompatibility between process thought and the concept of creatio ex nihilo. The process understanding of creation can in no way use or include this notion. It is possible, indeed desirable, to speak of creation out of chaos, but creation out of nothing must be laid aside. The question, then, which we shall be answering later on, is: Can a doctrine of creation which does not include this idea, make as strongly the affirmation about divine creation as do those doctrines which include it?

Process Theology and Creatio Per Verbum

The foundation for comparison between the process concept of creation and the traditional notion of creatio per verbum was laid when we concluded that God, in process thinking, was to be regarded as Creativity itself and that there are various aspects of his being Creativity itself. One of these aspects is his superjective nature. It is through the superjective nature that creativity is given to the creation.⁴² We

⁴¹Overman, Evaluation and the Christian Doctrine of Creation, op. cit., pp. 284, 270.

⁴²See above, pages 196ff.

further noted that this idea was parallel to John Macquarrie's concept of expressive Being which he identifies with the Logos. We then made the move of identifying Creativity as understood in process thought with the Christian understanding of the Logos. We can, therefore, expect to find considerably more compatibility between process thought and creatio per verbum than between process thought and creatio ex nihilo. Ironically though, process thinkers do not deal extensively with the idea of creatio per verbum. Little mention of it can be found in their writings; therefore, whatever conclusions we draw concerning it must be done mainly by analysis and inference.

By way of review, we noted the strong Biblical basis for the idea of creatio per verbum both in the Old and the New Testaments. We further noted that, although it is a persistent theme in the Bible, it is one which had gone through considerable development. The Old Testament idea is "creation by word" which means that when God "speaks" or expresses himself what he says comes to pass. The New Testament idea is "creation by the Word" which depicts God creating through the agency of his Word. These ideas are in no way regarded as contradictory. The second is seen as a philosophical understanding and explanation of the first. In the Old Testament there is no speculation as to how God creates by his Word, but, nonetheless, there was the assurance that God's word is the expression of his will and that his word contains within itself the power to implement the divine will. The New Testament idea is of the Word having its own identity although not an identity apart from God. Also, it is through the Word that God accomplishes his purposes of creation and redemption.

A basis for agreement between process thought and the concept of creatio per verbum is that the Biblical view of the Word is that it is neither a sound nor a symbol but an act or an event through which the power of God is affected in the world. Macquarrie's designation of the Logos as "expressive Being," the "outgoing life of God" is helpful in understanding this because this designation underlines that the Word "is not only agent in creation but really does enter into creation."⁴³ To see how this is compatible with process thought we must remind ourselves that in the previous chapter, we determined that creativity was not the "ultimate of ultimates" Whitehead thought it to be. Rather, creativity has to be seen as an aspect of God, the way in which he expresses himself in creation.⁴⁴ Defined and interpreted in this way, it is possible for us to say that the process notion of creativity is a way by which we can understand the traditional Logos doctrine, for, with regard to creation, we find in process thought that creativity performs the same role as the Word performs in some other theological systems.

Although he does not discuss it in detail, Hartshorne is impressed with the concept of creation by the Word. He sees the statement, "Let there be . . . " expressing a "decision in the divine life."⁴⁵ This represents God's free decision that something will happen, some event take place. God wills that there will be light, plants, animals, man,

⁴³Macquarrie, Principles of Christian Theology, op. cit., p. 203.

⁴⁴See above, pages 199ff.

⁴⁵Hartshorne, "The God of Religion and the God of Philosophy," op. cit., p. 165.

and what he wills comes to pass. Here, in narrative form, is an expression of what we have been discussing metaphysically as God's deciding to create an entity by giving it an initial aim. This is the decision which says that the entity will have its moment of creative synthesis and the decision as to what will be the framework, the possibilities for the entity's becoming.

Overman cautions that the statement, "Let there be . . . ," cannot be interpreted Calvinistically because this would suggest that God is imposing his will arbitrarily on the creature.⁴⁶ Certainly, the process understanding of, "Let there be . . . ," is not as strong as Calvin's. The decision God makes in providing the initial aim lies between absolute freedom and strict determinism. The entity is created to create itself, but there are limitations placed on this self-creation. The decision, "Let there be . . . ," does envisage a particular satisfaction for the creature, but it does not force the creature to have this satisfaction. On the other hand, it does not permit the entity to achieve just any type of satisfaction whatever. The possibilities of becoming are there, but which possibility shall be actualized is not predetermined for the creature. It shall make its own decision as to exactly what it shall be.⁴⁷ This is in agreement with Evans' explanation of the Biblical theme that divine words are acts which bring about results, but it is in agreement only if these results are not seen as being completely decided in every detail in advance.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Overman, Evolution and the Christian Doctrine of Creation, op. cit., p. 279.

⁴⁷See above, page 127.

⁴⁸See above, page 16.

The compatibility of the process notion of creativity with creatio per verbum is not limited to an Old Testament understanding of creation by Word. The process notion of creativity is also compatible with the New Testament concept of creation by the Word. In the New Testament we found that the creation of all things is attributed to the Word, the Logos of God, which becomes incarnate in the creation. Similarly, we find that, with the revision we have made in our understanding of it, Creativity can be seen as God's agency in creation. Through the Logos, God is related to the world both as creator and redeemer. Likewise, through his Creativity, God creates and redeems the cosmos. By means of this Creativity he is incarnate in creation. Creativity is not something other than God. Just as there is a distinction--but not a separation--between primordial and expressive Being helped us see, Creativity (as contained in the superjective nature) can be viewed as bearing the same relationship to God (in his primordial nature) as the Logos (understood as expressive Being) does to God (understood as primordial Being.) It would, therefore, seem justifiable to paraphrase the prologue to John's gospel in this manner:

There has always been Creativity.
 Creativity is an aspect of God, part of God himself.
 There never has been a time when God was without Creativity.
 Through Creativity all things have had and will have their
 becoming.
 Not one thing has become or will become without him.

Just as Jesus Christ was seen to be the complete and unsurpassable form of the Logo's incarnation in humanity, so can process thought affirm him to be the complete, unsurpassable instance of the incarnation of God's intended aim for all persons.

PROCESS THEOLOGY AND THE AFFIRMATIONS OF THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION

With the preceeding analysis in mind, it is now possible for us to see if process theology can make the same affirmation concerning the doctrine of creation as traditional theology does. We begin with the first affirmation.

God is the Source of All Existence, and the Creation is Totally Dependent on Him

In the first chapter we heard Thomas Aquinas answer the question, "What is divine creation?" by saying, "To create is, properly speaking, to cause or produce the being of things."⁴⁸ Although phrased differently by different thinkers, there was unanimous agreement that this was the essence of God's creative act. God, and he alone, can bestow existence. The gift of being is his unique, gracious and proper gift to his creation.

Process thinkers would not talk about God's creative act in terms of producing the "being" of things. For them the meaning of existence is "becoming" not being. If, however, the concept of becoming is substituted for being, process thought can make the same response as traditional thought. God causes or produces the becoming of entities. He is the source of their existence because he is the origin of their self-creation.

To understand this we must repeat again that the locus of God's creative act is in the giving of an initial aim to each entity. The importance of this cannot be stated too often. For purposes of our present discussion, we need to underline again the fact that in giving

⁴⁸ See above, page 28.

the initial aim God decides that there will be an entity and also establishes the boundaries within which that concrescence will take place. Significantly, Overman notes that the providing of initial aims serves the same function for process theology that creatio ex nihilo does for traditional theology. He points out what we have already seen--that those who first formulated creatio ex nihilo were trying to make it clear that God was the only reason that things exist. They supposed, of course, that existence came about all at once and had little or no notion of creatio continuo^a. Process thought is locked into evolutionary thinking, so rather than asking why creation happened, process thinkers ask for the reason that it is happening, and the answer they find is that God continuously provided initial aims. Overman states:

His [God's] provision of the initial aim is the only factor in the universe that can account for the start of a new process when old ones have been completed. Apart from God, past occasions by themselves would find their aims for a future completely thwarted, and whatever effectiveness they may have in contributing toward initial aims depends upon God's infinitely greater role in achieving a harmony of initial aims. Therefore, we are justified in saying that the notion of God as providing initial aims serves the same function as the notion of creatio ex nihilo--both point to God as the reason that things are.⁴⁹

God, then is the source of all existence since he gives entities their initial aims--aims which are created out of his synthesis of the cosmos.

We can carry this a step further by noting that God is responsible not just for the becoming of entities, but also the being of societies. As discussed earlier, process thought regards being as a function of becoming, and the locus of being is in the societies which

⁴⁹Overman, Evolution and the Christian Doctrine of Creation, op. cit., p. 281.

entities form. God is the source of the being of these societies in that he creates the entities that compose them. More specifically, he provides initial aims which will guarantee the preservation of a particular enduring object thus insuring its preservation through a period of time. His giving of the appropriate initial aims insures that this particular succession of entities will continue to be.

This point is extremely important for our comparison of process and traditional thinking. Discussions of creation in traditional thinking do not concern themselves with actual entities as process thought defines them. These discussions are about societies of entities, most usually about what process thought calls "living persons." In process thought, as opposed to traditional thought, a living person is not created only once, but must be re-created every moment of its life. The actual entities which compose the living person perish after their moment of self-creation. The living person cannot, therefore, perpetuate its own existence. It must rely on the creation of new entities for this. If God were to cease creating successors to the entities in a society, their being, in the traditional sense of the word, would cease to be. Therefore, the traditional "gift of being" refers to a perpetual process of creation, a process composed of the continuing creation of those entities which constitute a given society. God must be seen as the source of existence of both with regard to the becoming of entities and the being of societies.

Creation as transformation. It should be possible now for us to see that there is not an irreconcilable conflict in two seemingly opposed interpretations of creation. Some traditional thought has insisted that

The distinction between divine and non-divine creativity was that divine creativity gives existence itself while all other forms of creativity simply transform what already exists.⁵⁰ Process thought, on the other hand, sees all creativity as transformation because each new instance of creativity emerges from previous instances. In providing the initial aim God "transforms" (i.e. synthesizes) the data furnished him by previous entities. This is not, however, all that is involved. As we have just seen, the continued existence of a society depends on the perpetual re-creation of the entities which compose it. This re-creation is based on transformation. It is not the case that something which already exists is being transformed but rather that its existence depends on God's transformation of its predecessors. Traditional thought tends to see "being" as continuing without having to be recreated. Process thought does not permit this. Process thought does speak of God's transforming things which exist prior to any one creative act but these things have perished; they have ceased to have subjectivity. God does use his transformation of previous reality as the basis for his creation of new reality, but this transformation is not reshaping of what is already there. This transformation is re-creation. That God is involved in transformation in his process of creation in no way compromises his being the source of all existence.

Existence--essential or existential? Earlier, we saw how traditional theology said that the gift of being was an appropriate gift for God to give. God in traditional thought is "Being itself," and,

⁵⁰ See above, page 28.

therefore, he can properly give being to all creatures.⁵¹ Since Thomas equated "not being" with "nothing" it is clear, on the basis of our previous analysis, that in process thought God is creating being out of not being by creating succeeding entities to previous ones. What, though, in process thinking, does God's gift of existence mean to the creature? Pieper's discussion of the Augustinian and Thomist viewpoints helped us to see that the distinction between the two was between Augustine's "essentialistic" approach and Aquinas' "existentialistic" approach. For Augustine, existence is something an entity is; for Aquinas, existence is something an entity does. Augustine believes that the essential being of things, their natures, is what God gave them in bestowing their being on them. He is thinking in terms of essences. God gives each creature its essence. Thomas believes that what God is giving each creature is its existence, its sheer act of being. Essence, he holds, is secondary to existence.

Process theology stands between Augustine and Aquinas, embracing some aspects of both men's thinking on this issue. Process thought is close to Thomas in its insistence that the act itself is the fundamental meaning of existence. In Thomas this is being; in process, becoming. What is actually created in a synthesis varies radically among the various entities, yet all of them share in exemplifying the process of self-creative synthesis. Like being in Thomism, this becoming in process theology is the basic reality that all entities whatever share. Things are because they become, because they exemplify creative synthesis.

⁵¹See above, page 30.

The process concept of becoming is close to Augustine in that each entity, through its initial aim, is pointed toward a particular concrescence. God intends that an entity should achieve a certain, definite satisfaction. Unlike Macquarrie, for example, who sees letting be as an abstract principle, Hartshorne insists that the divine creation does have definite content.⁵² The aim is specific in what the entity could--and should--become. Also, there is a definite sense in which God does decide what an entity will be because he determines what entities compose its heritage and, therefore, will have causal efficacy in its concrescence. The difference between process thinking and Augustine's is that Augustine sees God determining the essence of entities and process thought sees God luring each entity toward a particular satisfaction. The process notion of satisfaction can be compared with the traditional notion of essence, since the only aspect of an entity which does not change is its satisfaction. Its satisfaction is what it will be eternally. This satisfaction is determined by the entity itself and not by God. Therefore, the entity can be said to determine its own essence. There are, of course, limits set to this, but within these limits the entity is free to determine its final satisfaction.

By way of summary, we can conclude that process thought on this is more open-ended than Augustine's but not as open-ended as Thomas'.

⁵²With Hartshorne we prefer to think of the content as being created "fresh" for each entity. The argument is not altered, however, if we think with Whitehead and Cobb that this content has existed eternally and God chooses a particular eternal object (or set of objects) for this particular occasion.

There is more to becoming than just the act, the process, itself, but the results of the process are not predetermined, just limited.⁵³

The dependency of the creation on God. Seeing that God is the source of all existence leads traditional theists to the conclusion that the world is dependent, absolutely dependent, on him. Several writers pointed out that the purpose of the doctrine of creation was not primarily to point to an event but to express a relationship--a relationship of total dependency of the creature on God.⁵⁴ Without God's bestowing being, creation would not be. Were he to rescind what he has given, creation would return to nothingness. This means that, in spite of an emphasis on the initial act of creation, there is also an emphasis in traditional thought on the understanding that God is involved in the maintenance as well as the initiation of being. As long as a creature exists, his existence is dependent on God. Again, Augustine and Aquinas presented us with contrasting views on what this means.⁵⁵

As we noticed, Augustine saw creation as being essentially a single act. All creation was simultaneous and instantaneous, but not everything that now exists came into existence exactly as it is now. Some things did, but others were created as "seeds which hold the potential for all future creation." Thomas believes that God is continually creative. The effect of God's creative causality sustains the creature as long as it exists. If this were to stop, the creature would no

⁵³Whitehead and Cobb, who retain the concept of eternal objects, are closer to Augustine, and Hartshorne is closer to Aquinas even though all of them stand somewhere in between the two.

⁵⁴See above, pages 34-35.

⁵⁵See above, pages 35-37.

longer be. This perspective is called creatio continuo^o. Of the two views, process thought is closer to Aquinas than to Augustine.

It is stating the obvious to say that process thought has a strong concept of creatio continuo. As far as each actual entity is concerned, its creation is not a continuous process. Its existence as an experiencing subject is momentary. When it is through, it perishes. It is preserved as an object for other experience, but this is not creatio continuo. The entity is, though, dependent on the entirety of the process of cosmic creation which is creatio continuo. The locus of creatio continuo is in the continuing creation of actual entities which compose the various social structures throughout the cosmos. Societies endure as they receive new members. Therefore, God continues the existence of a society. One must view the entire cosmic process as continuous creation. God's own sequence of self-creative acts is the supreme example of creatio continuo, and the world depends on his continuous process of self-creation.

There is no sharp distinction in process thought, as there is in some traditional thought, between original and continuous creation. All creation exemplifies the model of creative synthesis. Continuous creation simply refers to the on-goingness of the creative process. God brings new entities into becoming and continues to do so. The same actual entity is not re-created nor sustained in being. A successor to that entity is created which will embody the data it has received from its predecessor. Thus, as God maintains the existence of societies, we may and must speak of his creation as creatio continuo.

Process Thought and Providence

In our survey of traditional thought, our discussion of creatio continuo led directly into a discussion of providence. Quite a divergence of opinion exists on the relationship between creation and providence ranging from Gilson--who sees an intimate interconnectedness between the two so that in some ways providence is but the continuation of God's creative act--to Brunner who insists that a careful distinction and separation be made between the two.⁵⁶ Most scholars surveyed, however, agree that creation and providence are connected and that providence represents the perpetual presence of God with the creature. Even those who do not view providence as an extension of God's creative act realize that the creatures' continuing existence is governed and sustained by God.

The process understanding of providence. Process thinking about providence is quite precise. It focuses on the order found with the cosmos. Divine providence "sets the limits to the free interplay of lesser individuals which would otherwise be pure chaos."⁵⁷ We have already seen how God is the principle of limitation and, as such, supplies the order in the world.⁵⁸ The vast number of free agents in the world could not, operating on their own, produce order. All are, therefore, influenced by one agent, God, who decides the broad outlines of world order and then, through their initial aims, leads them toward the

⁵⁶See above, page 40.

⁵⁷Charles Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection and Other Essays in Neo-Classical Metaphysics (LaSalle: Open Court Publishing Company, 1962), p. 314.

⁵⁸See above, page 147f.

best harmony possible with that order. As Hartshorne says, "One unsurpassable or divine agent with a multiplicity of surpassable ones, covers both the possibility of order and that of partial disorder."⁵⁹ He illustrates this by saying that a committee with no chairman and no directive would be chaotic. Given a chairman and a directive, there still might not be perfect order, and, if he were a good chairman, there would not be control of every detail of the committee's work. The committee would be free to reach its own decisions on the business at hand. Still, there would be sufficient coordination for the committee to function reasonably effectively.⁶⁰

Providence, then, is to be found in the order God imposes on the relationships which exist between the various free entities composing the cosmos. In saying this, we can see that process thought takes both the entity's freedom and its need for limitation seriously. Because of the nature of the creative process there is always risk and opportunity involved. As we have mentioned, in each self-creative act, an entity is given the opportunity to attain what God considers to be the best possible satisfaction it could achieve. This is not just the best for the entity personally but also the best in terms of the relationship the entity would have with other entities and in terms of the contribution it would make toward the future. Since the entity is free to create itself and modify its aim, there is always the risk that it will, within limits, become something other than God intends. Because of this, there is always the risk that the order God seeks to achieve will be

⁵⁹Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, op. cit., p. 62.

⁶⁰Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, op. cit., p. 314.

substantially disrupted. Adjustments must then be made in the creation of subsequent entities to maintain a basic order. What Hartshorne sees happening is that "providence decrees that the range of possibilities set out before an entity involves the most favorable relation of risk and opportunity in view of the antecedent decisions that have been made."⁶¹

God has exercised some control over these antecedent decisions, but in no way has he determined them. He is not able to impose his will. This means that he cannot guarantee that everything will be perfect for the creature. The free decisions of other entities may have rendered this impossible. He says, "The lesser individuals, being more or less ignorant of each other, act somewhat blindly with respect to many of the effects of their acts."⁶² Granting that this individual freedom is inherent in individual existence, the best that God's providence can guarantee is that the order will be made up of free but mutually compatible creatures. "The divine perfection lies . . . in the wise and efficient limitation of the risks to the optimum point beyond which further limitation would diminish the promise of life more than its tragedy."⁶³ Through his synthesis of all value that entities attain, God can give new initial aims to subsequent entities which, if actualized, would provide the best order possible. The entity may not come very near to actualizing it. God does not, however, allow the entity the possibility of totally disrupting the order of the society in which it is found by being totally incompatible with other entities.

⁶¹Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 137.

⁶²Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, op. cit., p. 203.

⁶³Ibid.

Providence, therefore, cannot mean that nothing will go wrong in the world. Process thought takes the reality of failure and tragedy quite seriously. They are everywhere throughout the cosmos. Because of creaturely freedom the world will not be perfect. Again quoting Hartshorne:

The root of tragedy . . . is in free creativity, and if freedom of creativity is reality itself, tragedy is necessarily pervasive. But if Supreme Creativity inspires all lesser creative action, and takes it up into its own imperishable actuality, then the opportunities of existence outweigh its risks, and life is essentially good.⁶⁴

Here, then, is what providence means for the creature. It means that the opportunities for the attainment of value outweigh those for its non-attainment. This is so because the potential it has been given has been adequately adapted to its environment. It can utilize its potential to the fullest and can strive to achieve the highest it can attain. There is no exclusion of the possibility of frustration, but, nonetheless, the world will be basically supportive.⁶⁵

Just as we say that process thought can happily include both freedom and limitation with the system; likewise, it can include both chance and providence. Hartshorne says the alternatives of either chance or providence is invalid. Explaining this he contends:

Providence is not the prevention of chance but its optimization Chance is within limits and these limits cannot be set by chance, for chance, limited by chance, is the same as chance and not limited at all. And chance not limited at all is sheer chaos, everything together, or nothing at all. The reality of chance is the very thing that makes providence significant.⁶⁶

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 14.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 110.

⁶⁶Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 137.

The purpose of providence, as this quotation indicates, is not to eliminate chance or risk. The purpose of providence is to support or sustain the creature in a world that is filled with chance and risk. The significance of providence is that it minimizes the opportunities for evil and maximizes those for good. God's providence accompanies the creature throughout its existence doing precisely this. Process thought can, therefore, avoid the painful alternative that many other systems must face--either there is no divine control or God is the author of all ill. God does not decree that the creature shall suffer. All that he decrees is that suffering is possible but so is the attainment of a high level of intrinsic value. It is toward this, not suffering or tragedy, that the entity is lured.⁶⁷

Process theology and Calvinism. In understanding how process thought on the subject of providence compares with traditional thought, we can begin by putting it alongside a view with which it contrasts markedly--the view of Calvinism. Calvin holds, as we saw, a very deterministic view of providence.⁶⁸ Nothing happens unless it is in accordance with God's will, and everything which happens insures the success of his plan for the world. Process thought finds this intolerable. Hartshorne says that there is absolutely no reason at all "for positing the notion of providence as an absolute contriving of all events according to a completely detailed plan embracing all time."⁶⁹ This idea is

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸See above, page 41.

⁶⁹Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 23.

doubly objectionable. First, it denies genuine creaturely freedom. If all the decisions have already been made, what is there for the creature to do except enact what's already been determined for it? Second, if God is the only decision maker, he is responsible for all that happens, even suffering and evil. This second point is dealt with later. Concerning the first, process thought insists that there is no "detailed plan embracing all time." In place of the cosmic plan, process thought sees cosmic process. The details of the cosmic process are the result of the process itself. Just as each entity determines what its final satisfaction will be, so the specific, concrete aspects of all creation are determined by it not for it. God does not determine the outcome of the world process any more than he does the outcome of an individual synthesis.

What does this say about divine purpose? Is there no teleology in divine creation? We have seen that there definitely is a cosmic purpose in terms of God's subject aim, his own purpose in self-creation.

Quoting Whitehead, we noted that "the teleology of the universe is directed toward the production of beauty,"⁷⁰ and quoting Hartshorne, "God is an artist fostering and loving the beauty of the creatures, the harmonies and intensities of their experience, as data for his own."⁷¹

God's purpose, then, is in creating maximum intensity and harmony within the cosmos, the maximum of unity-in-variety which God himself will enjoy. Hartshorne contends that such enjoyment can reach "no final maximum, but

⁷⁰Whitehead, The Adventure of Ideas, op. cit., p. 265.

⁷¹Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 309.

is endlessly capable of increase, since the divine capacities for aesthetic enjoyment are strictly infinite."⁷² This is not just an egoistic self-satisfaction. God wants to enjoy creaturely good, the same good creatures seek for themselves.

None of this suggests that any particular details of beauty and harmony must be envisioned for God's purpose to be fulfilled. Hartshorne illustrates this by saying, "A man who goes to the theater to be amused can say that he has accomplished his purpose without implying that he knew in advance just what jokes he wished to hear!"⁷³ It is quite possible, indeed desirable, to speak of an abstract cosmic purpose which is indeterminate as far as concrete details are concerned.

The problem with teleologies like Calvin's, Hartshorne believes, comes from failing to see that there are many purposes, many aims--not just one purpose, one aim--in the cosmos. He says:

An absolutely controlling purpose would be the sole purpose, and could not have as its aim the creation of other purposes. If there be even two purposes, two decisions, then the conjunction of these two into a total reality must in some aspect be undecided, unintended, a matter of chance.⁷⁴

God's aim is an all-coordinating but not an all-controlling aim. Providence is found in God's ability to coordinate not to control.

Having said this, one final comment about process theology and Calvinism must be made. Although he nowhere says this, Hartshorne could agree with Calvin that nothing happens unless God wills it. He could make this affirmation because he sees God willing freedom for his

⁷²Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, op. cit., p. 310.

⁷³Ibid., p. 214.

⁷⁴Ibid.

creatures. God wills that each entity, whose creation he initiates, be free to be self-creative. This is the fundamental meaning of his creative act. He creates other self-creators. This is his intention in creation. He does not will that they should not make their own decisions and be at least partially causa sui. He wills to take the risk that their freedom implies. Calvin's mistake, from a process perspective, was in believing that God wills the exact details of each creature's existence. This God simply does not do. He does give them possibilities for their self-creation and lures them toward those which are best, but he does not will that they must follow his leading. He wills that they be free to follow or not to follow. This cosmos is exactly the sort of cosmos God wills it to be because it is composed of myriads of self-creative entities. This is what God wants; this is what he gets. Unfortunately, Calvin never considered the possibility of God's being flexible and capable of adapting himself and his purpose to whatever concrete realities the world produced. Without the notion of something parallel to God's consequent nature, it would be impossible to permit the creature genuine freedom. Were he to stray beyond God's intention, God could not maintain his sovereignty over him. In process thought God is sovereign over the creature because he is the one who finally receives into himself all that the creature does. He initiates the creature's self-creation and receives that self-creative act back into his own self-creative act.

Our survey of traditional thought on the subject of providence revealed that there are two aspects of God's providence, a general and

a particular aspect. General providence refers to God's involvement in nature and history. Particular providence refers to the individual attention he gives each creature. Process thought includes both these aspects. We can call God's continuous creation of order throughout the cosmos general providence. His giving of initial aims to each entity and his preservation of the various societies can be labeled specific providence. General and specific providence are, in process thought, two ways of looking at the same thing, for it is through the initial aim that both are accomplished. Because of the social nature of reality, all providence is both general and particular. God is individually involved in the life of each entity, and at the same time and the same way, in the life of each society from atoms to the cosmos. For purposes of comparison with traditional thought, however, we can look at general and specific providence separately.

General providence. General providence always involves a discussion of the natural order, for one way in which any creature is sustained is through a natural order which supports and sustains his existence. General providence is seen in the fact that there is an order in nature on which creatures can and do rely. We cited Tillich's statement that God maintains "the continuity of the structure of reality as the basis for being and acting."⁷⁵ This continuity is sometimes called natural law. Without it the continuation of existence would be impossible or at best fortuitous. This aspect of providence is frequently referred to as God's sustaining his creatures.

⁷⁵See above, page 42.

Process theology has a slightly different perspective on this because it sees the sustaining of a creature's existence located in God's re-creation of the entities which compose a particular society. An orderliness of nature is required for this, as we have already seen. Concerning this Hartshorne says:

We can . . . infer from scientific knowledge that God must intend nature to follow certain patterns, those which she universally does follow. This enables us to understand what it can be in nature that gives her a reliable structure, and indeed, enables a coherent world to exist at all.⁷⁶

He goes on to say that the "so called Laws of Nature" are simply the limits God sets on creaturely creating.⁷⁷ By placing limits on the entities' acts of self-creation, God imposes harmony on nature. Societies can, then, endure over a protracted period of time. We must, however, stress again that this order is a changing order, and, therefore, even the most enduring objects are not eternally fixed in their being. A society is assured, though, that it will have continuing self-identity. A human experience will not be followed by a stellar one within the same society.

Traditional thought, in speaking of God's providence in nature, refers primarily to how the natural order is supportive of man. God is frequently envisioned as directing the order of nature to benefit man, and questions arise at the point when nature does not seem to do this. Process thought denies a separation between man and nature. Although not denying the particularity of man, it has insisted that

⁷⁶Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, op. cit., p. 110.

⁷⁷Ibid.

human existence be seen as one part of all existence. Evolutionary thought would point out that God has lured the cosmos to the point where a society as complex as the human soul could emerge, but that does not mean that God is only interested in humankind. God's interest is in the entirety of the cosmos, and he aims at maximum intensity of feeling throughout the creation. Hartshorne points out that there is a dominant Western tendency to regard the rest of nature as nothing but a means to human ends. He says:

Western science makes the extreme form of Christian exaltation of man as the sole valuable form of life rather ridiculous since it implies that divine purpose took billions of years to get to something of value.⁷⁸

He goes on to point out that in process thought every singular instance of creativity has intrinsic value. Man is merely the supreme not the sole contributor of value to the divine life. God's providence in nature must be seen in reference to the whole of creation.

God's creation of the natural order is often seen in traditional thought as God's sustaining his creature. There is another facet of general providence which concerns itself with God's governing of the creature. This is history. Barth, as we saw, emphasizes God's operation in history through which he directs its course in accordance with his will.⁷⁹ The history of Israel serves as an excellent example of God's providential governing of his creatures.

Here again, as in the case of nature, we find process thought insisting that human history is not the only history with which God

⁷⁸Charles Hartshorne, "Cobb's Theology of Ecology" John Cobb's Theology in Process, eds. David R. Griffin and Thomas J. Altizer (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), p. 114.

⁷⁹See above, page 43.

has been concerned. Our discussion of evolution pointed out that God was involved in cosmic history before the arrival of man. The cosmos has a history before humanity which is significant and which has contributed value to the divine life. Cosmic history, like human history, is under God's providential guidance because God has limited and ordered it. Human history must be seen as only one slice of history in general.

Process thought takes history very seriously. Overman stresses the fact that "the things in the world come into existence as historical in nature."⁸⁰ The reliance of any entity on its tradition and heritage for the data it needs in self-creation points to this fact. God creates each entity within a historical setting. Furthermore, God's purposes have been realized within evolutionary history. Again, we must note that God's governing of history has not been and is not now despotic. He has not arranged the events of history so that only one particular end would be achieved. His governing of history has reflected the divine flexibility which takes into account creaturely deviations from his intended purpose. History has been and is open-ended but, nonetheless, guided by God's enduring subjective aim. Overman illustrates:

To regard human personality as part of a historically evolving nature means . . . that the evolution of man was but one way in which the divine aim for beauty of creaturely experience might reach concrete expression. We are the unlikely outcome of an immensely long process, during which countless other possibilities have been excluded, and it may be that as God envisioned the future a billion years ago, he was quite indifferent as to whether homo sapiens would turn out to be the avenue through which his aims for beauty on earth are now mainly channeled.⁸¹

⁸⁰Overman, Evolution and the Christian Doctrine of Creation, op. cit., p. 282.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 289.

None of this compromises the Biblical intuition that there is a strong purposiveness in history. It simply says that this purposiveness includes a myriad of ways for its realization. Whitehead points out that God is not committed to any particular course of history. "The given course of history presupposes his primordial nature but his primordial nature does not presuppose it."⁸² God is inescapably involved in history but is open to what that history will be. "There is a yearning after concrete fact--not particular facts, but after some actuality."⁸³ There is divine guidance for specific events embodied in specific initial aims, but this does not reflect a reaching toward a specific goal. We must remind ourselves that the teleology of process thought is aesthetic not historical. The universe is aimed at beauty and the achievement of maximum satisfaction for each occasion. Hartshorne elaborates:

Order is drive toward harmony in the relations of past, present and future, of self and others immanent in self. It is aesthetic teleology Local order can in some minor way be in the hands of local orders, . . . but cosmic order . . . can only be safe or anything but doomed, if there be a unitary cosmic aesthetic drive.⁸⁴

It is this drive that governs history. Overman takes this one step further:

The relevant future for God's experience is infinitely long and inclusive, so that he can provide for individual occasions just those initial aims which are harmonious with movement toward far distant kinds of beauty as yet envisioned only by him. This is the reason we have intuitions of a

⁸²Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 70.

⁸³Ibid., p. 50.

⁸⁴Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 82.

general providence, the reason that evolution appears as a movement toward higher kinds of societies.⁸⁵

What we can say about human history, then, is that it is a way in which God is seeking to fulfill his purpose. It is probably, as Overman suggests, the primary way in which he is doing this now. God intends that each human occasion enjoy fully the history which he gives it. With Overman we can agree that:

If it is true that God's aims for man are most fully realized in that strand of history culminating in Jesus, perhaps God holds that history out for us with particular concern as part of the lure for feeling with which we begin each moment of our lives.⁸⁶

Process thought probably takes history more seriously than any other theology for it alone posits that God is historical. He has a present, a past and a future. This is expressed through the understanding of his consequent nature which has been influenced by all past reality and in which all history is everlastingly preserved. God's own life is caught up in the history of his creation, just as the history of creation is caught up in the life of God.

Specific providence. Before discussing general providence, we noted that there is no fundamental distinction between general and specific providence. They are simply two ways of looking at the same phenomenon. Process thought would concur completely with Brunner when he says, "Providence is just another name for the fact that the God who looks at me and never ceases to look at me, at the same time with his glance embraces the whole and unites his will for me with his will for

⁸⁵Overman, Evolution and the Christian Doctrine of Creation, op. cit., p. 274.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 275.

the world."⁸⁷ By looking at general providence we obtained a cosmic perspective on God's creative care. As we look at specific providence, we will focus on his concern for each entity.

The creation of actual entities is the locus of God's creative act. All he does is accomplished through this. His creation of each entity reflects a dual concern. We have just dwelt on one of these-- his concern for the cosmos attaining ever increasing levels of beauty. This concern is part of another concern, the enjoyment of a maximum intensity of feeling for each entity. God, then, is not just concerned about the cosmos but is also and at the same time concerned about each entity which composes it. Whitehead explains that God's purpose for the world is always "embodied in the particular ideals relevant to the actual state of the world."⁸⁸ Overman comments that herein is found process thought's agreement with all theological doctrines of special providence, "the main intent of which is to express faith that God's overall purposes do not exclude his attention to the particular situations on earth."⁸⁹

In our earlier discussions we saw how through the initial aim God provides the best satisfaction an entity could attain for itself. God is wanting only "the best" for each of his creatures, and he makes that best possible for them. This is the core of his special providence. God maximizes to the greatest extent possible, the possibility of each entity achieving its best possible concrescence. Because he gives each entity freedom as he creates it, he does not coerce the entity into its

⁸⁷Brunner, The Doctrine of Creation and Redemption, op. cit., p. 157.

⁸⁸Whitehead, Religion in the Making, op. cit., p. 152.

⁸⁹Overman, Evolution and the Christian Doctrine of Creation, op. cit., p. 250.

best possible concrescence. He sets the optimal conditions under which the best possible concrescence could be achieved. Hartshorne points out that in this "optimum setting of conditions" there is "neither a degree of safety, mitigation of risk that would be too dearly paid for in depression of opportunity, nor a degree of opportunity or promise that would be too dearly paid for in inflation of risk."⁹⁰ God's special providence, then, balances security and risk. It does not eliminate either. The conditions for concrescence are neither too dangerous nor too tame. Again, as in the case of general providence, we are faced with the fact that divine providence does include an element of chance. As Hartshorne says:

Providence can reasonably be conceived, not as a simple alternative to chance, its mere negation or prevention, but only as a channeling of chance between banks less than infinitely close together. The function of Providence is not to enforce a maximal relation of good to evil, but a maximal ratio of chances of good to chances of evil.⁹¹

While traditional thought has generally agreed that the creature has no passport to safety and that he may encounter disaster along the way, some thinkers have insisted that the proof of God's providence lies in the ultimate security of the creature. Brunner is an example of these. With reference to God's care for man, he points out that it is only ultimately that the creature may be considered safe. Those who are God's will not suffer ultimate defeat, for the promise of eternal life is always there. Their redemption is secure.⁹² Process thought can agree with Brunner on this if we remind ourselves that ultimacy for process theology is found

⁹⁰Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 129.

⁹¹Hartshorne, Reality as a Social Process, op. cit., p. 107.

⁹²Brunner, The Doctrine of Creation and Redemption, op. cit., p. 157.

in an entity's being included everlastingly in the consequent nature of God. Here he is eternally secure. The value that he has attained is free from any threat of destruction. God does save all that can be saved in each concrescence.⁹³ This is the source of an entity's ultimate security and the final expression of God's providential care for him.

The importance of this idea is seen in the fact that Whitehead refers to the consequent nature of God as "heaven" or "the Kingdom of Heaven"⁹⁴

. . . the kingdom of Heaven is with us today It is the particular providence for particular occasions. What is done in the world is transformed into a reality in heaven, and the reality in heaven passes back into the world. By reason of this reciprocal relation, the love in the world passes into the love in heaven, and floods back again into the world.⁹⁵

To be included in the consequent nature of God, the Kingdom of Heaven is the ultimate destiny of the creature. To enhance and enrich that kingdom is its goal. This understanding of heaven is not totally dissimilar to the usual one of "a place where one goes after death." An entity is included in the consequent nature only after it has perished. Immortality is possible only after an entity has ceased to be the subject of its own experience. Defenders of a traditional view of heaven would insist that there must be a continuation of subjectivity after death. Heaven must be "enjoyed" by those who have reached it. In process

⁹³ See above, page 162.

⁹⁴ Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 532. See also Cobb's interpretation of this. "The Kingdom of Heaven" Chapter 14 in Christ in a Pluralistic Age, op. cit., p. 221f.

⁹⁵ Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 532.

thinking an entity does not enjoy its immortality. It is possible, though, for those entities which compose a society to experience the perfected actuality of their predecessors. A society, such as a human being, can enjoy the riches of the kingdom of Heaven as part of his present existence. Hartshorne, who is skeptical of the traditional Christian idea of heaven, pays tribute to the ancients who did not consider themselves immortal but knew that God's love for them was everlasting. He says that all entities live eternally as "creatures of the divine awareness." God is their "ultimate posterity."⁹⁶

Life beyond the grave has been seen as unimportant in process thinking. There is nothing, however, that outlaws its being possible. The soul could continue to exist in situations radically different to life on earth, but it would itself be radically different. This would not exclude the possibility of a continuing identity for a creature in a life "beyond" this one. Cobb comments that one who believes in God as process thought understands him, is entitled to hope for life after death. He says:

He is entitled to hope first because belief in the divine spirit already implicitly entails belief that reality is not limited to the sensuously accessible world and hence opens up the possibility of belief that there are other spirits as well. And he is entitled to hope also because the God who brought order into being out of chaos, novelty out of endless repetition, life out of subliving nature, man out of subhuman forms of life, and the occasional saint out of a sinful humanity, may also have the power to sustain or recreate man in a quite new form.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Hartshorne, "The God of Religion and the God of Philosophy," op. cit., p. 157.

⁹⁷ Cobb, God and the World, op. cit., pp. 101-02. See also his "Whitehead's Philosophy and a Christian Doctrine of Man," Journal of Bible and Religion, XXXII/3. The subject of life after death needs more attention from process thinkers than it has so far received. Griffin does provide a reasonably complete discussion of it in the appendix to God, Power and Evil.

Summary. Even though, as Cobb suggested, the meaning of many terms has been transformed through a decisively different conceptualization of what is meant by creativity, creator, and creature, process theology, can affirm with traditional theology that God is the source of all existence and that the creation is completely dependent on him. Through the interpretation of creativity put forward in this dissertation, creativity is seen to be God's Logos, his way of expressing himself in the cosmos. The locus of this creative self-expression is found in his giving of an initial aim to each new entity. Without these, entities would not have their own process of self-creation. The initial aim is his "gift of becoming." Process theology further sees in God's creation of new entities within a society, the preservation of that society over an extended period of time. God, therefore, is the source of all existence because without his decision that an entity have its concrescence, that entity would not become. Likewise, if he did not decide that there would be entities succeeding other entities, the existence of a society would cease. Both of these point to the absolute dependence of the cosmos on God.

Where process thought differs from traditional thinking is in its insistence that God's creative act results in the creation of entities who are, within limits, self-creators. Creation by God is not absolute determinism of either the essence or the existence of an entity. God's creativity both gives and guarantees creaturely creativity.

This insurance of freedom does not mean that the creature is alone or separated from God. Providential care is part of God's creativity. Even though he does not determine the exact course of history nor the precise order of nature, he has led and is leading the cosmos to

ever higher levels of beauty and to an increasing attainment of value. Through his own synthesis of all value attained in the creation, he everlastingly preserves each creature guaranteeing its immortality. Since all creation is initially and ultimately part of God's self-creation, it can be affirmed that the creation is accompanied and sustained by its creator.

Once again, we must note that process thought is demanding more freedom for the cosmos and the creature than traditional theology would allow. Whether or not this freedom critically compromises the power of God is a question we will answer when we have looked at the other basic affirmations concerning creation in the light of process thinking.

The Creation is Distinct from God and even though Corrupted by Sin, is Fundamentally Good

As we saw in the first chapter, traditional thought insisted that while there is but one God, there are two fundamental realities--the creator and his creation.⁹⁸ While demanding that the ontological dependency of the creation on the creator be affirmed, there was also the demand that any ontological continuity be denied. There was unanimous agreement that creator and creature were of separate substance. Any monistic thought was totally and officially rejected. Here again, we have a sharp contrast between process thought and traditional thinking. As we have seen repeatedly, process thought speaks of the cosmos being included in God's consequent nature. God is, in one aspect of his being, partially constituted by the creation. Are we then discussing a form of pantheism which must be rejected outright? The process answer to this question is an emphatic, "no."

⁹⁸ See above, page 50.

Panentheism. Process thought cannot be identified with classical pantheism any more than it can with traditional theism. To understand this, some careful definitions must be made. Hartshorne provides them:

Pantheism is conveniently defined as the logical contrary of pure transcendental deism. (The term, theism, which is more commonly used for the contrary of pantheism, suggests that the doctrine conforms to religion, really describes the theos, the God of worship, and that is open to dispute.) Deism here means that God is the super-cause taken as self-sufficient, a complete being, in abstraction from any and all of his effects. God thus excludes the world; he is only its cause, in no sense is he effect, of himself or anything else. Pantheism (better "pandeism" for again it is not really the theos that is described) means that God is the integral totality of ordinary cause-effects, and that there is no super-cause independent of ordinary causes and effects. God thus includes the world; he is in fact the totality of world parts which are indifferently causes and effects.⁹⁹

Hartshorne points out that most traditional theism has defended its doctrines on the mistaken belief that its view, transcendental theism, is the only alternative to pantheism. This is not the case. There are basically three views one can hold: (1) God is the cosmos. He is the totality, the sum of the system of all dependent things. This view is pantheism and can be identified with Spinoza. (2) God is not the system and is, in every aspect, independent of it. This is traditional theism typified by Thomas Aquinas. (3) God is both the system and something independent of it. This view Hartshorne calls panentheism ("all in God") and is the view held by Whitehead and other process thinkers.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 347.

¹⁰⁰Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 90. See also his Philosophers Speak of God, op. cit., pp. 15-25, for a detailed classification of theistic doctrines.

As is apparent, there is a polarity reflected in traditional theism and pantheism. Panentheism, as indicated by its dipolar concept of deity includes both poles. According to the Law of Polarity, which we cited earlier, ultimate contraries are correlatives and mutually interdependent. They do not have to exclude each other and must in fact include each other. God needs to be seen as separate from yet including the cosmos. Hartshorne comments:

Panentheism agrees with traditional theism on the important point that divine individuality, that without which God would not be God, must be logically independent, that is, must not involve any particular world. The distinction between individual and state, or personality and experience enables us to combine this point of theism with the equally necessary point of traditional pantheism that God cannot in his full actuality be less or other than literally all-inclusive. This view is exactly as far from traditional pantheism as from traditional theism.¹⁰¹

In our previous discussions of God's relativity to the world, we have spent considerable time distinguishing between panentheism and traditional theism. Basic to this was our understanding of God's consequent nature which indicates how God includes the world. This also leads us to the understanding of how panentheism differs from pantheism. Hartshorne says the difference between them is the difference between the statements, "God is all things" and "God includes all things."¹⁰² Unlike pantheism, panentheism does not see the divine reality exhausted by the totality of the cosmos. God is more than the sum of all things. Whitehead's intuition that God was the sum of all entities in the cosmos plus one--himself--indicates that God has an individuality beyond that of the cosmos.

¹⁰¹Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 90.

¹⁰²Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, op. cit., p. 120.

Panentheism does not deny the absolute, eternal, essential nature of God as does pantheism. Just as traditional theology denies the consequent nature of God, so pantheism denies his primordial nature. Panentheism affirms both. Both pantheism and theism are in a sense true. It is not that there are two Gods but one God with two natures--an independent and a dependent one. Panentheism affirms God as containing both an independent all causative factor and the totality of all effects. This is simply the distinction between what God is in himself and is in any one of his particular, concrete states. Hartshorne says:

Common to theism and pantheism is the doctrine of the invidious nature of categorical contrasts. One pole of each is regarded as more excellent than the other, so that the supremely excellent being cannot be described by the other and inferior pole.

This results in a dilemma:

Either there is something outside of deity, so that the total real is deity-and-something else, a whole of which deity is merely one constituent; or else the allegedly inferior pole of each is an illusory conception. Theism takes one horn of the dilemma; pantheism the other.

Panentheism is the way out of this dilemma. The full actuality of God includes both poles. Each is equally part of him.

That God includes all things in himself does not suggest that these things have no identity apart from God. They are independent as well as included. As we have noted, the entities composing the cosmos have their subjectivity before they are included in God's consequent nature. As subjects, they are independent of him. As subject, God is likewise independent of them, for, though he includes them, they do not

¹⁰³Hartshorne, Philosophers Speak of God, op. cit. p. 2.

determine his full concrete actuality. His own synthesis of them does this. God and the cosmos are not synonymous. God only includes the cosmos as constituent of his consequent nature. The cosmos has its own integrity as does God.

Traditional thought would want process thought to affirm that God and the world are of "separate substance."¹⁰⁴ This would be difficult, for process thinking makes little use of substance categories. It is, however, possible for process thought, using its fundamental category of event rather than substance, to affirm that the events which constitute each entity and those which constitute God are not identical. Even though the entities furnish data to God for his self-creation and he furnishes data to them for theirs, each is more than the data he receives.

Cobb suggests that an understanding of the spatio-temporal relationship of God to the world is helpful in understanding the logic of panentheism. The modern concept of space-time is not that space is a fixed receptacle which pre-exists the events which fill it. Rather, the events which take place have patterns of relationships which can be described as extensive in that they include successiveness and contemporaneity. For this reason, events can be seen as being spatio-temporal. Each event receives its data from a particular spatio-temporal standpoint and its spatio-temporal standpoint determines the particular data that is relevant to its synthesis. The difference between the spatio-temporal standpoint of other entities and of God is that while other entities occupy a specific, limited standpoint within the whole of the cosmos, God's standpoint is the entirety of the cosmos. Each entity other than God is

¹⁰⁴ See above, page 47.

somewhere. God is everywhere. His standpoint is all-inclusive, so in a sense, everything is part of God but it does not follow that God is simply the sum of the total of his parts or that the parts lack independence or self-determination. Because God's spatio-temporal standpoint is all inclusive, he can include localized events within it. Cobb illustrates this by saying that the electrons in his brain enjoy their subjectivity from a very limited standpoint while he enjoys his experiences from a much more inclusive standpoint. The experiences in Cobb's brain have an independent self-identity, yet they are included in his self-identity. He says: "The events occupying the inclusive space and those occupying the included space act upon each other in complex ways, but they have their distinct individuality and autonomy. They are independent as well as interdependent."¹⁰⁵

Cobb concludes his argument by saying "Panentheism is the synthesis of the central concerns of traditional theism and pantheism, and it distinguishes itself from both only in ways that are secondary."¹⁰⁶ The central concern for traditional theism against pantheism, as Cobb sees it, is not the spatial separateness of God and the world, but that God and other creatures must be understood as having integrity in themselves. The central concern of pantheism against theism is to reject a creator who is outside the world manipulating or controlling it from without. Pantheism seeks to understand God as pervading the world and manifest in all its parts. To both these central concerns panentheism says "yes" and, beyond that, provides a conceptualization which can hold them together.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Cobb, God and the World, op. cit., pp. 77-79.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 79.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 80.

The goodness of creation. We have established that even though God is included in the creation and the creation is included in God, they are separate and distinct. The question now before us is the same one as the one facing traditional theology: If the creation is distinct from God, can it be affirmed as essentially good?

The foundation of the traditional affirmation of the goodness of creation is, as we saw, God's evaluation that it is good.¹⁰⁸ It could hardly be supposed otherwise for God is good, not only in himself but in everything he does. Therefore, the creation is good because of the goodness of the creator. Even though good, the creation is not to be regarded as perfect. Perfect goodness belongs to God alone.

Process thought is in basic agreement with traditional thinking here. Cobb says that "the possibility of affirming life and humanity depends on belief in God. The ground for . . . affirming the goodness of creation is belief in the goodness of the creator."¹⁰⁹ He continues by saying:

That means that the goodness faith perceives in God is no mere function of the goodness seen in creation. The highly ambivalent appraisal of man's worth and excellence to which the study of human history must lead, is wholly inappropriate in relation to God. The Christian apprehends God as embodying just that purity of goodness for which he searches the world and himself in vain.¹¹⁰

For some traditional thinkers, this belief in the goodness of God is all that is required for affirming the goodness of creation. One must simply accept this and not question further. Others have not been content

¹⁰⁸ See above, page 52.

¹⁰⁸ Cobb, God and the World, op. cit., p. 97.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

to stop here and have tried to explain what, from a creaturely standpoint, would make this affirmation possible. Process thinkers would also want to proceed this way.

Augustine contends that simply to be is better than not to be. Existence in and of itself is good. Again, we have agreement from process thinkers. Cobb points out that this is the first of the fundamental assumptions behind the process affirmation of the world process. It is better that there be creative experience than there be nothing at all.¹¹¹

Traditional thought goes beyond this and so does process thinking. Augustine insists that in spite of being corrupted, each thing is basically good, and taken altogether, things display an "admirable beauty." With Augustine, process thought is committed to an aesthetic standard for evaluating the goodness of creation both with regard to individual entities and to the totality of all entities, the cosmos.

As we noted earlier, God's subjective aim in each instance of his creating is an aim toward beauty.¹¹² We have indicated that much more is meant by the word "beauty" than is implied in common usage. Occasionally, process thinkers use the word to mean simple aesthetic pleasure,¹¹³ but usually it is a more inclusive term including what Hartshorne sees as the three headings for value--acting rightly, thinking correctly, and experiencing well or satisfactorily. He says:

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 93.

¹¹²See above, pages 165-68.

¹¹³See Whitehead, Modes of Thought, op. cit., p. 12.

The basic value is the intrinsic value of experiencing as a unity of feeling of whatever volition and thought the experience contains, and exhibiting harmony or beauty. If we know what experience is, at its best or most beautiful, then and only then can we know how it is right to act; for the value of an action is in what it contributes to experiences.¹¹⁴

The achievement of beauty, therefore, is what makes experience good. It is toward this beauty or goodness that God lures each creature with the initial aim.

As indicated in the above quotation from Hartshorne, Griffin says that in process thinking, beauty generally refers to the intrinsic goodness of an entity. Intrinsic goodness means the goodness of something in and of itself, the value it has attained in its own synthesis. No reference need be made to anything other than the individual entity in determining this type of goodness.¹¹⁵ As far as each creature is concerned, the intrinsic goodness of its experience is the "enjoyment" it has of its self-creative experience. According to Griffin, there are two variables involved in this enjoyment, harmony and intensity. Both of these have been discussed previously.¹¹⁶ The question is how do they function as criteria for goodness?

Harmony, as we said, means the compatibility of the various factors within the synthesis. Intensity refers to the "excitement," the "zest," the "adventure" that can be part of the experience. There

¹¹⁴Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 301.

¹¹⁵Griffin, God, Power and Evil, op. cit., p. 282.

¹¹⁶See above, page 167.

is always a certain amount of tension between these two factors. Harmony is easier to achieve among data which are similar. Intensity requires diversity and complexity. For some syntheses, harmony may be of greater value than intensity and vice versa for others. Both must be present to some degree, however. For an experience to be enjoyed, the various elements in that experience must not clash to the extent that discord outweighs harmony; yet, for a maximum of harmony to be enjoyed, there must also be a certain level of intensity, otherwise the value attained will be trivial. The capacity of an entity to have both harmony and intensity depends on the entity itself. The more complex an entity, the greater its capacity to cope with contrasting elements in its experience. "An increasing capacity for intrinsic goodness means an increase in the power to integrate harmoniously an ever-greater variety of data from the environment."¹¹⁷ The level of beauty that an entity can attain corresponds to the nature of the entity.

In addition to intrinsic goodness, there is also instrumental goodness. This is the capacity of an entity to influence others for the attainment of value. As we talked about creative synthesis, we noted that an entity's subjectivity is private, but its objectivity is public. The way in which it constitutes itself determines the influence it can have on another. The more value an entity has attained in its own synthesis, the more it can contribute to other entities. In other words, the greater the intrinsic goodness of an entity, the greater its potential for instrumental goodness. Griffin says, "Those actualities

¹¹⁷ Griffin, God, Power and Evil, op. cit., p. 292.

which are more complex and intense in themselves, also have more to contribute to others. A weak individual exerts a weak influence and a strong one a strong influence." He continues to show how this is born out in the evolutionary process.

Living cells could not have emerged directly out of an arrangement of enduring individuals as primitive as protons and electrons. Those lowly creatures cannot contribute the types of data necessary for the emergence and sustenance of living occasion of experience. The intermediate states of atoms and molecules were needed. Likewise, an animal soul . . . could not emerge directly out of a complex combination of molecules. Molecules do not have the capacity to contribute the variety, type and intensity of data necessary to provide an adequate basis for a soul.¹¹⁸

The final instrumental value of an entity is seen in the contribution it makes to creative advance.

This brings us to the second aspect in evaluating the goodness of creation, the beauty displayed by the cosmos as a whole. Hartshorne says, "The beauty of the cosmos is the spectacle of its innumerable forms of creative social experience, all basically in harmony together."¹¹⁹ This harmony, as we have seen, is not the simple harmony of similar experience but a complex intense harmony arising from wide diversity of experience. This harmony arises as disharmony and is overcome. As noted earlier, process thought believes that in spite of there being disharmony within the cosmos, harmony is pervasive, therefore, the cosmos as a whole is beautiful and good.

Up to this point process thought is not too far away from traditional thinking in its affirmation of the creation's goodness, but

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 295.

¹¹⁹ Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, op. cit., p. 106.

but there is one aspect to this affirmation wherein process thought and traditional thinking part company. Hartshorne says that the beauty of the cosmos is both inspired and enjoyed by God. We have already cited his belief that God is an artist "fostering and loving the beauty of the creatures, the harmonies and intensities of their experiences, as data for his own."¹²⁰ The ultimate reason for evaluating the cosmos as good is found in the instrumental value it holds for God's own experiences. Not only are entities contributing to the experiences of other entities, but they are also contributing to God's experiences. They can and do provide him with the attainment of value which is needed for his own growth. In his primordial aspect he lures and leads the creation to ever higher levels of beauty which he himself, in his consequent nature, will enjoy. The goodness of the creation ultimately lies in its ability to enrich God. For example, from a human perspective, what makes life good is the possibility human existence presents for a person making a meaningful contribution to God, or more specifically to the "Kingdom of Heaven," God's consequent nature. Such a viewpoint is, of course, repugnant to traditional thinking. God does not need, in any aspect of his being, to be enriched. We will address this issue later on.

In summary, process thinking finds the creation good because each creature is given the maximum opportunity to have the best possible experience for himself in his own self-creative synthesis and also, because this affords the creature the chance to contribute real

¹²⁰ Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 183.

value to other creatures' experiences. The ultimate dimension of this is found in the possible contribution each entity can make to God. Because there are these possibilities and because the cosmos is led toward their actualization, the universe may be affirmed as being good. Just as traditional thinking does not find it necessary to insist that the creation be "perfect" to affirm its fundamental goodness, process thought does not suggest cosmic perfection as a criterion for goodness. In fact, process thinking recognizes that all possible value is not attained. This brings us to the question of evil in the cosmic structure and its effect on belief in the goodness of creation.

The problem of evil. In the first chapter we saw how the existence of evil posed an enormous problem for affirming the basic goodness of creation.¹²¹ Process thought, while not denying or diminishing the existence of evil, regards it as being, from a philosophical standpoint, a "pseudo-problem"--one that has been created by philosophers and theologians holding the wrong concept of divine power. The question of how evil can exist in a world created by an all-loving and all-powerful God, can be adequately answered if divine power is properly understood.¹²²

From what has been said previously, we are already familiar with the process concept of divine power.¹²³ First of all, it insists that divine power is not the only power in the cosmos. Power, in the

¹²¹ See above, pp. 54-70.

¹²² Hartshorne, "A New Look at the Problem of Evil," op. cit., p. 202.

¹²³ See above, pp. 175-78.

form of freedom for self-determination, is found in each instance of creative synthesis. God does not monopolize power. To be a creature means to be self-creative. Without this power, creatures would not be creatures. God could only have absolute power over something which was absolutely powerless. God's power is only one of the powers shaping the cosmos. It is however, vastly superior to all other powers.

This understanding of God's power must be taken one step further. It is, as we have seen, persuasive and not coercive.¹²⁴ God does not force the entities to conform to his initial aim for them. Rather, he lures them toward its actualization. Creatures cannot be completely controlled and be creatures. Absolute control contradicts the essence of their self-hood; their freedom for self-creation. Griffin points out that this means God's power as being persuasive power is to be understood as metaphysical and not moral. "God does not refrain from controlling the creatures simply because it is better for him to use persuasion, but because it is necessarily the case that God cannot completely control the creatures."¹²⁵ God, however, can and does limit creature power by restricting the chaotic aspect inherent in individuality. Freedom for self-creation is limited but not controlled.¹²⁶ This understanding of the power of God makes it possible for us to recognize the evil in the world for what it is without having to compromise the goodness of God.

That God does not have a monopoly on power and that the power

¹²⁴ See above, p. 174f

¹²⁵ Griffin, God, Power, and Evil, op. cit., p. 276.

¹²⁶ Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, op. cit., p. 295.

he does have is persuasive power, forms the basis of the process understanding of why there is evil in the cosmos. Hartshorne makes this explicit.

It is not God alone who acts in the world; every individual acts. There is no simple producer of the actual series of events; one producer, to be sure, is uniquely universal, unsurpassably influential. Nevertheless, what happens is in no case the product of his creative acts alone . . . a multiplicity of choosers means that what concretely happens is never simply chosen; rather, it just happens . . . Concrete evils and goods simply happen, they are never in their full particularity chosen. Hence, to ask, why did God choose to inflict this or that evil upon us? is to ask a pseudo-question.¹²⁷

Hartshorne also says that since creatures do have the freedom to decide what their self-creation will be, evil arises from "unfortunate creaturely decisions." God does not inflict evil on the creatures; evil is inflicted on the creatures by each other.¹²⁸ Hartshorne illustrates this with the Biblical example of Job. Job's sufferings did not come from God, rather they came "from Satan via the Sabaeans, the Chaldeans, lightning, wind and also . . . bacteria and his own bodily cells"¹²⁹ These are responsible for Job's sufferings, not God.

The question must now be asked, what constitutes an unfortunate creaturely decision? Unfortunate creaturely decisions are those that fail to conform to the divine purpose. As we have noticed frequently, when God gives an entity an initial aim, that aim embodies the divine purpose for it. This divine purpose includes both what is best for the entity individually, and as part of the society to which it belongs.

¹²⁷ Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, op. cit., p. 58.

¹²⁸ Hartshorne, "A New Look at the Problem of Evil," op. cit., p. 205.

¹²⁹ Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, op. cit., p. 122.

If the entity were to fulfill God's aim, it would have not only maximum intensity of feeling but also maximum compatibility with other entities. Being free to fulfill the aim or not to fulfill it, entities often modify their initial aim and become other than what was intended for them.

As far as most creatures are concerned, this modification of their initial aim is unconscious. We are talking here of what is usually referred to as natural evil. Most evil in the "natural world" is of this type. The creatures are not aware of what they are doing. Hartshorne says we cannot blame the malarial mosquito for biting someone since it has no way of knowing what the consequences of its action will be.¹³⁰ Likewise, one cannot blame a small child for some of the things he or she does because the child is literally "too little to know any better." Someone or something can only be held accountable if he realizes what he is doing. This consciousness of one's actions is what separates natural from moral evil. Sin is the willful refusal to do what one knows is God's will which is what is best for the individual or other individuals. Cobb points out that if God did not draw persons toward some ideal which was in tension with their other urges, the question of sin would not arise. Without God's leading, everyone would do whatever he wanted, but there would be no growth in terms of sensitivity to others, nor would there be any attempt to harmonize conflicting self interests.¹³¹ Natural and moral evil differ primarily on the issue of consciousness. Both represent the failure of creation to achieve the goodness God intends.

¹³⁰Hartshorne, "A New Look at the Problem of Evil," op. cit., p. 205.

¹³¹Cobb, "Whitehead's Philosophy and the Christian Doctrine of Man," op. cit., p. 210.

This failure to achieve the goodness God intends can result in two dimensions of intrinsic evil. One is triviality. The other is discord.¹³²

Triviality is the opposite of intensity. As we noted in the previous section, intensity of feeling is the highest value which an entity can attain. If the value attained is an experience of creative synthesis and is considerably less than it could have been, the experience is said to be trivial. There is a deficiency here in what could be attained. Superficiality is a frequent form of this evil. Although it is impossible to speculate about the experiences of all creatures, it does seem certain that human experience is frequently trivial. To the extent that this triviality degrades the person, it is evil. There is a real sense of loss, of lack of achievement, in triviality. Whitehead illustrates this form of evil by saying that the experiences of a hog are not evil if they are in fact the experience of a hog. If, however, these are the experiences of a person, then they are evil because they are less than they should have been.¹³³

Discord is the extreme form of disharmony. As we saw, an entity in striving for maximum intensity of feeling, will disrupt the harmony that has been created but, this is with the purpose of achieving even richer harmony. Such is not discord. Discord arises when an entity creates a disharmony which cannot be subsumed into

¹³²Griffin, God, Power and Evil, op. cit., p. 94.

¹³³Whitehead, Religion in the Making, op. cit., p. 94.

some richer pattern of harmony.¹³⁴ The feeling of destructiveness, a feeling experienced both by the entity and the society of which it is a part, is the experience of evil. As in the case of triviality, there is also a sense of loss here. In place of the intended higher form of harmony, discord has emerged.

It is important to emphasize that both triviality and discord are seen as evil in process thinking. Whitehead says, "evil is exhibited in physical suffering, mental suffering and the loss of higher experience in favor of lower experience."¹³⁵ Suffering is what we have called discord, loss of higher experience is triviality. Most discussions of evil, as noted in our previous discussion, focus almost exclusively on discord. Triviality is not considered. Yet, in process thinking, it is the greater of the two evils.

To process thinking, the avoidance of unnecessary triviality is important, because this is the basis of the creative advance of the cosmos. As we saw when looking at evolution, the advance of the cosmos has come as the cosmos has produced entities capable of higher, more intense experiences. God's initial aim is not only toward enjoyment in the present, but also toward the possibility of future enjoyment. For this advance, it is necessary to risk discord to attain more of an intense experience and, hence, greater intrinsic good. Griffin mentions that if this greater intensity of experience were not a goal, it would be much easier to solve the problem of evil. If evil is only suffering,

¹³⁴Norman Pittenger, "Process Theology and Evil," The Expository Times LXXXII/3, (December, 1971), p. 74.

¹³⁵Whitehead, Religion in the Making, op. cit., p. 92.

then the way to avoid it would be for God to lure the cosmos toward a simple harmony wherein no possibility of discord would be present because there would be no striving toward higher values. However, since goodness involves the promotion of intrinsically rewarding experiences, God must not avoid the possibility of the evil of discord at the expense of the value of a possible greater intensity of experience.¹³⁶ Discord and triviality must both be avoided, either one is an evil, but avoiding triviality is paramount.

Since both triviality and discord indicate loss, it is possible to note the compatibility of process thought with the traditional concept of evil as being a privatio boni. In process thought, as well as much of traditional thinking, evil is regarded as being privative in nature. The entity lacks something it could and should have had. This is the maximum intensity of feeling or full enjoyment of its synthesis. This is a deprivation in two ways. First, the entity itself fails to attain the best possible satisfaction. It attains less value than it could have. The value God intended in the initial ^{aim} has not been realized. If I decide to be stingy when the situation would have best been served by my generosity, then my decision is evil. Second, this intrinsic deficiency creates an instrumental deficiency because it does not provide the best possible data for the creative advance. Pittinger says, "The purpose of God in creation is the augmenting of all possible good, achieved through the decisions of the creatively occasions or events."¹³⁷ As we saw when we looked at evolution, God

¹³⁶Griffin, God, Power, and Evil, op. cit., p. 285.

¹³⁷Pittinger, "Process Theology and Evil," op. cit., p. 74.

lured the cosmos toward ever greater self-actualization. When God provides each entity with its initial aim, he has determined what the entity should become if this creative advance is to continue. Failure to be what God intends, deprives the cosmos of one step in the advance. Again citing Pittiner, "Evil . . . is that which holds back, diminishes or distorts the creative advance of the cosmos toward the shared increase of good."¹³⁸

Is every failure to attain the full value of the initial aim, evil? Aquinas insisted that not every absence of good was evil--only the absence of those things which are genuinely needed. We have already indicated that the possible value that could be attained in any creative synthesis depends on the nature of the entity itself. The initial aim contains the maximum value possible for that entity to attain. Nothing is lured toward something impossible for it to achieve. God does not want a horse to have human experiences. We cannot, therefore, speak of a privation when this does not happen. The privation comes when the horse's experiences are not adequately equine.

Aquinas goes further by pointing out that some things are not intrinsically evil but rather evil in the effect that they have on others. Just as there is instrumental goodness, so there is its opposite, instrumental evil. Evil exists when something is in destructive conflict with its environment. Process thought also holds this position. Hartshorne points out that cancer cells are not intrinsically evil. They are evil because they are in conflict with the organ of which they are a part. Among themselves, the cancer

¹³⁸ Ibid.

cells achieve harmony, but their internal harmony is in conflict with their external environment. As a result of this, disease, pain, and suffering result.¹³⁹

There is yet another point of contact between process thought and the thinking of Augustine and Aquinas. Augustine and Aquinas both believe that good is the source of evil. Aquinas worked this out on the basis of Aristotle's categories of causality.¹⁴⁰ Process thinking does not say that good is the source of evil but rather that good and evil are caused by the same thing--creaturely freedom. According to Hartshorne,

The price of a guaranteed absence of evil would be the equally guaranteed absence of good Risk of evil and opportunity for good, are two aspects of just one thing--multiple freedom; and that one thing is also the ground of all meaning and all existence.¹⁴¹

It would be impossible to have a world in which there would not be the possibility of evil because there would also be no possibility for good. It is the free creaturely decision which determines both. As we have noted repeatedly, this creaturely freedom implies risk--the risk that something other than the good God intends, will be attained. Yet, a world without the risk of evil would not be worth having because there would be no opportunity for attaining the good. For example, Pittenger points out that human pain or suffering is just the other side of physical, mental or emotional pleasure. Both

¹³⁹Hartshorne, "A New Look at the Problem of Evil," op. cit., p. 209.

¹⁴⁰See above, pp. 36-38.

¹⁴¹Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, op. cit., p. 81.

are made possible in the same way.¹⁴² Hartshorne puts the issue like this:

It is argued that a divinely-created world must absolutely lack evil, be devoid of suffering and frustration, as well as of wicked intentions. But could 'good' mean anything in a world in which any contrasting term would be totally excluded by omnipotent power? And in such a world how could the creatures, who would have no genuine option, even know what was meant by divine freedom to choose this world out of the totality of possibilities? And if they could not know it, then the envisaged perfect would be one in which at least the good of creaturely understanding of the creator was quite impossible.¹⁴³

Process thought, therefore, says that God does permit evil, but this can only be understood as meaning he gives creaturely freedom. He could not do this and outlaw the possibility of evil. He does not keep evil from happening, just as he does not keep good from happening. Neither alternative is forced on the creature. God permits evil in the same way he permits good. It is in the creating of the possibility of good, that the possibility of evil arises. Cobb says, "Only where there are values does the prospect of thwarting them arise. The possibility of pain is the result of the capacity for intense feeling which comes from heightened consciousness."¹⁴⁴

God as the "fellow-sufferer who understands." Even though God does not, indeed cannot, prevent evil, he is not neutral to its happening. He wills goodness by luring an entity toward it in the initial

¹⁴²Pittenger, Process Theology and Evil, op. cit., p. 75.

¹⁴³Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, op. cit., pp. 81-2.

¹⁴⁴Cobb, God and the World, op. cit., p. 96.

aim. Through the initial aim, he attempts to persuade the entity to attain the best possible for it. Cobb says that we can only think of "omnipotence" in terms of this persuasion. If it has any meaning at all, it can only mean that God "exercises the optimum persuasive power in relation to whatever is. Such an optimum is a balance between urging toward the good and maximizing the power--therefore the freedom--of one whom God seeks to persuade."¹⁴⁵ Secondly, once evil has occurred, God moves to ameliorate it. This takes place in the third phase of the creative process when God saves whatever good he can from the synthesis that has taken place. He then issues the best possible aim, under the given circumstances, for the entities which will follow. He cannot instantly make everything turn out right. His creative act is limited by the actualities of the world. He can, however, issue a new aim toward the best that is possible, considering the situation.

God cannot prevent an entity from choosing to become less than he intends for it to become and, thereby, attaining little value that he can include in his own life. Not only can creatures contribute to the divine experience in which a high level of value has been obtained, but they can also contribute experiences in which the value obtained is virtually nill. God, by his very nature, must include all experiencing in his own experience. He cannot choose to overlook the bad and use only the good. His omnipotence means he knows everything that happens and this knowledge has casual efficacy. He not only

¹⁴⁵Ibid, p. 90.

knows the event itself, but he also knows the feelings that are part of it. These are the data of his experiences. He suffers with the world, just as he rejoices with the world, because the world is in him. Because God includes everything in himself, not all his experiences are good ones. Hartshorne comments:

The idea that God equally and solely experiences bliss in all his relations, is once and for all a denial of the religiously essential doctrine that God is displeased by human sin and human misfortune. Without such displeasure, the words 'just' and 'loving' seem mockeries.¹⁴⁶

This passivity indicates that God is dependent on his creatures for his weal and woe. In our human situation we include, albeit imperfectly, the joy and suffering of a few others. God, because of his omniscience, includes all joy and suffering in his experiences. Because he includes the pain of the world, Whitehead calls him "the great companion--the fellow-sufferer who understands."¹⁴⁷ Hartshorne comments on God's being "the fellow-sufferer" by saying:

The cross is the sublime and matchless symbol of this The point is that in whatever sense incarnation is required to make God passive, in that sense the incarnate God is the only God that reason, all revelation apart, can give us any conception of, as well as the only God of any use to religion.¹⁴⁸

If God experiences the evil in the world and the discord that results from it, is he to any extent evil? God must not, from the process perspective, be regarded as evil. Even though he permits evil, he lures the creatures toward the good. Even though he is influenced by evil, he turns that evil toward the good. In no way is he qualified by that which

¹⁴⁶Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 195.

¹⁴⁷Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 532.

¹⁴⁸Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 198.

makes evil a matter of ethics and morality--the willfulness to do less than what is known to be best. God is not evil, because he wills only what is best for the creatures. We can then say that God knows evil and experiences evil, but he does not will or do evil. When evil occurs, it is not because he has chosen it but because the creature has done something other than what God would have had him do.

Even if God is not evil, since he creates the order of the cosmos and since he does not prevent the creature from doing evil, is he not still responsible for the evil in the world? Yes, according to process thought, he is responsible for evil but only in the same way that he is responsible for the good. Griffin says that whether or not God should be indicted for this is to be answered in terms of the question: Are the positive values that are possible in our world valuable enough to be worth the risk of the negative experiences which have occurred and the possibility of even greater evils which may occur in the future? He answers his question with a question:

Should God, for the sake of avoiding the possibility of persons such as Hitler and horrors such as Auschwitz, have precluded the possibility of Jesus, Guatama, Socrates, Confucius, Moses, Mendelssohn, El Greco, Michaelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Florence Nightingale, Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, Chief Joseph, Chief Seattle, Alfred North Whitehead, John F. Kennedy, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sojourner Truth, Helen Keller, Louis Armstrong, Albert Einstein, Dag Hammerskjold, Reinhold Niebuhr, Carol Channing, Margaret Mead, and millions of other marvelous human beings well known and not well known alike, who have lived on the face of the earth?¹⁴⁹

For Griffin and other process thinkers, the risk is worth taking. God, therefore, should not be indicted for permitting the possibility of evil.

¹⁴⁹Griffin, God, Power and Evil, op. cit., p. 309.

Summary. Drawing together what has been said, we can conclude with Hartshorne that "we should accept our risk-full world as essentially good and providential."¹⁵⁰ The reason for this is because of the opportunities that are provided for ever-increasingly intense levels of experience which are not only intrinsically satisfying but can also contribute value to the experiences of others. Because God, in his consequent nature, is the ultimate recipient of all value, the ultimate goodness of the creation lies in its capacity to enrich the divine life and, thereby, enhance the cosmic advance. God lures all creatures toward fulfilling in their concrete experiences, his ideal aim of beauty.

Not everything which happens in creation is good. Evil is very much a part of the cosmic scene. Evil arises because God does not force the creatures to do what is best. They are free to accept or reject the lead he offers. The possibility that the creature will create discord instead of harmony is the risk God takes in creating. The risk is always present because of the freedom for self-creation which is part of each entity's becoming. There is a direct correlation between the opportunity for good and the opportunity for evil in each situation.

When evil does occur, God is not indifferent to its happening. He is "neither a transcendental snob nor the transcendental tyrant, ignoring creatures or enslaving them." Rather, he is the "unsurpassably interacting, loving, presiding genius and companion of all existence."¹⁵¹ As such, he experiences within himself both the pleasure and pain of the

¹⁵⁰Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, op. cit., p. 112.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 137.

world. Moreover, his experiences transform all that happens into the richest harmony possible, and, on the basis of this harmony, he issues new initial aims to all subsequent entities which again lure them toward the best concrescence possible.

The responsibility that the creature has for the success of the cosmic enterprise is apparent. Hartshorne comments that it is up to us "to minimize by our own wisdom, energy, courage and good will the most destructive risks."¹⁵² No matter what the creature does with his freedom, his responsibility to God will not fail to exist. This should not lead us to believe, however, that a failure on the creature's part will endanger God. Hartshorne says:

We are not to think that by sinning we can jeopardize his being, or that by good acts we can make the universe safe for him. But it is one thing to contribute to the safety of a being, its freedom from the danger of annihilation, and another to contribute to the color and richness of its existence. Granted that God will continue to exist, with essential characteristics of power, goodness, and wisdom, no matter what we may do. It does not in the least follow that he will also have the same concrete experiences no matter what we may do. His essence may be independent of us but his accidents may not be.¹⁵³

Process thought takes the creatures' capacity for good and evil with total seriousness. That the creatures' actions can affect God and the cosmic advance, places great importance on what creatures do, but no matter what the creatures do, God can work some good out of it. Therefore, his creation is basically good.

¹⁵²Ibid., p. 113.

¹⁵³Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 107.

Creation is the Free Act of God's Gracious Love

The final affirmation which is made concerning the doctrine of creation in traditional thinking is that creation is the free act of God's gracious love. Pointed out here is that in no way is it necessary for God to be a creator. He does not have to create because he has no need for anything outside of himself. There is nothing compelling him to create; therefore, creation is a free act. He creates simply because he wants to create. The only motive he can have for his creating is love. Hepburn gives this summary.

The emphasis on creation as freely willed by God, is in no way necessitated, allows the doctrine to express the central affirmation about God, that his nature is love It is possible, therefore, to see the creation of the world as a wholly gratuitous exercise of love."¹⁵⁴

Traditional thinking goes even further than this by insisting that God gains nothing by creating. There is no way in which the creation can enrich him. His creating is totally altruistic, entirely for the benefit of others.

Herein is one of the major conflicts between process and traditional thinking. Process thought contends that it is the very nature of God to create. He is Creativity itself. Without creating, God would not be God. We have seen how process thought understands God in terms of becoming rather than being and how this becoming is dependent on the synthesizing of the data furnished him by his cosmic environment.¹⁵⁵ God does need the creation. He requires the existence of some creatures, and he has the power to guarantee absolutely that there will be some creatures

¹⁵⁴Hepburn, "Creation," op. cit., p. 253.

¹⁵⁵See above, p. 90.

This power is his creativity which he pours out through his superjective nature. Just as in traditional thought where the existence of God is seen as necessary, so in process thought God has no option between existing and not existing. The conflict is between the two understandings of what it means to exist. Given the process understanding of existence as becoming rather than being, it is totally consistent to insist on the necessity of there being a creation.

Because process thought does contend that God needs the creation, traditional thinkers contend there is an irreconcilable conflict between process thought and an acceptable doctrine of creation. Pannenberg, for example, says the "mutual interdependence" of God and the world "is unifiable with no concept of creation."¹⁵⁶ Hartshorne is well aware of the clash and contends that traditional thought is wrong at precisely this point.¹⁵⁷ Nothing will be gained by trying to reconcile process and traditional thinking on this issue. It is however, possible, indeed necessary, to see that process thought does affirm both divine freedom and divine love in God's creative act.

God's creating as a free act. In understanding this point of God's needing the creation and yet his creating being a free act, it is important to reiterate what we have said before. God does need some creatures, but he does not need any specific creature. Hartshorne says there is an important distinction to be made "between the necessity of

¹⁵⁶Wolfhart Pannenberg, "A Liberal Logos Christology," in John Cobb's Theology in Process, eds. David R. Griffin and Thomas J. J. Altizer (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977) p. 147.

¹⁵⁷Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 144.

God's existence as a loving creator and the contingency of his reality as creator and lover of just the creatures which exist."¹⁵⁸ His dependence on the creation, then, is not a dependence on there being the particular creation which does in fact exist but rather on there being some creation. It is necessary that there be a creation. What that creation will be is totally contingent. God is not, therefore, dependent on the existence of any one particular creature or even the totality of all existing creatures. All that he requires is that there be a creation in some form or another. Again citing Hartshorne: "That God exists and loves is true about all actual and possible states of affairs. That God loves us is indeed one such state."¹⁵⁹

That God is not dependent on any particular entity indicates that he has more freedom in his creating than the critics of process thought would admit. He must create, but he does not have to create any particular entity. Therefore, it is his free decision just what entities will in fact be created. Understood this way, process thought, even though affirming the necessity of God's creative act, can affirm that his creating is free. He is not forced to initiate the self-creative process of any entity. It is, as we have seen, his decision on the basis of his own subjective aim and that an entity will have its moment of becoming.

Hartshorne does not contend, however, that God's free creative act is totally altruistic. The creative act reflects the perfect

¹⁵⁸Hartshorne, "Is God's Existence a State of Affairs?"
op. cit., p. 29.

¹⁵⁹Ibid.

coincidence of self-love and love of others. He says:

In God there is indeed a perfect agreement of altruism and egoism. For whatever good God may do to any being anywhere he himself, through his omniscient sympathy, will enjoy. The future welfare of all beings will be entirely included in the future satisfactions of God.¹⁶⁰

Not only does Hartshorne say that the process concept of God's purpose in creating is not completely altruistic, but also the traditional notion, when carefully thought through, fails to reflect a total lack of self-interest. He finds two difficulties with the traditional view. First of all, it is not self-evident that God's creating is totally altruistic because there is divine purpose served by his creating.¹⁶¹ Altruism, he says, "is an identifiable experience as a process of participation in the good of others, so that some sort of value accrues to the self through the very fact that value accrues to another self."¹⁶² This does not suggest that selfishness is the only motivation there is in creating, but it does indicate that there is a benefit derived from having helped, or at least having tried to help, another. Therefore, to talk of divine creating as being altruistic and devoid of any benefit to God is misleading for it implies that he has no purpose in his creating.

Hartshorne's second objection is that if God is purely altruistic in his creating, then the creature, according to traditional metaphysics, must be purely ego-centric in his. The reason for this is because traditional thinking does not allow that God might

¹⁶⁰Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 161. See also Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 309.

¹⁶¹See above, p. 75.

¹⁶²Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 118.

be benefited by what the creatures do. Hartshorne asks, "Is it not the noblest aspect of religious aspiration, the wish to have a cause to serve, some value to enrich by our contributions, which is more satisfying as an object of service than mere man?"¹⁶³ Such an object should be God, for, he points out, we often fail in our attempts to benefit others. If God is not ultimately benefited by our efforts, then no one is, and much of what we do is futile and without purpose.

As we just mentioned, traditional thought does insist that there is a purpose in creation. Earlier, we specifically noted Calvin's view that the purpose of creation was to be a "theatrum gloriae Dei" and Luther's idea that the purpose of creation was for God to have a sphere where he could express his love toward something "over against" himself.¹⁶⁴ We further noted that these concepts suggested something to which their advocates would not want to subscribe--that the creation is in some way necessary. Why speak of glorifying God if he does not actually receive the glory? Why talk of loving God if he is not touched by our expressions of love? Concerning Calvin's perspective, Hartshorne contends that even though the aim of creation is God's glorification, God is not really benefited by our glorifying him. The reason for glorifying God is that it is important that the creature glorify the Creator. "God should be praised and made to seem as great as he would in any case be, even without glorification."¹⁶⁵ Therefore, it is only important to the creature and not to God that God be glorified.

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴See above, p. 77.

¹⁶⁵Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 130.

Hartshorne feels that this "humanly self-regarding view" is blasphemous, for it makes man ultimate. He is the ultimate beneficiary of his own praise to God.¹⁶⁶ In place of this insult, we should understand that the purpose of the creation is "to serve and glorify God, that is, literally to contribute some value to the divine life which it would not otherwise have."¹⁶⁷ This is precisely the process perspective. God is more adequately glorified when he can receive the benefits of his glorification than when these benefits are arbitrarily denied him. The "theatrum gloriae Dei" is the arena where the creatures "enjoy rich harmonies of living and pour their richness into the one ultimate receptical, the life of God."¹⁶⁸

It is significant that Brunner sees the purpose of creation as being the Kingdom of God,¹⁶⁹ for as we saw earlier, process thought calls the consequent nature of God the Kingdom of Heaven.¹⁷⁰ Biblically speaking, the terms "Kingdom of God" and "Kingdom of Heaven" are synonymous,¹⁷¹ so we have at least a verbal agreement between process thought and one traditional thinker. The level is deeper than this, however, for both see the kingdom as being the place where the will of God is done. From the process perspective, we have seen how each entity, through the initial aim, is given the opportunity of making the maximum contribution possible to the Kingdom of Heaven.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., p. 133.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., p. 127.

¹⁶⁹See above, p. 77.

¹⁷⁰See above, p. 259.

¹⁷¹O. E. Evans, "Kingdom of God, of Heaven," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 17.

God then uses whatever value has been attained in his own synthesis of the cosmos. The more value an entity has attained, the greater is the possibility of the advance of the Kingdom. In process thinking the purpose of creation is truly to make a contribution to the Kingdom even though the precise nature of that contribution is not determined for the creature. The coincidence of an authentic egoism and altruism mentioned a moment ago, pertains to the creature as well as to God. The creature's greatest personal satisfaction would also provide the greatest benefit for God's Kingdom. Hartshorne concludes that "God needs only one thing from the creatures: the intrinsic beauty of their lives, that is, their own true happiness through his perfect appreciation of them. This appreciation is love."¹⁷²

God's creating is an act of love. We are now ready to see how process thought conceives God's creative act as a gift of love. Much of what we say here will summarize what we have been saying elsewhere.

Hartshorne looks upon his entire philosophical enterprise as a justification of the early Christian insight, Deus est caritas, words which he believes are "contradicted as truly as they are embodied in the best of the older theologies." The reason for this contradiction is the older theologies' denial of the "essentially social character of the supreme or cosmic being." Without an understanding of God as being "social" and "related," it would be impossible to think of him as being loving, for love implies a relationship.¹⁷³ Hartshorne offers this definition: "To love is to rejoice in the joys and sorrow with

¹⁷²Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 163.

¹⁷³Ibid., pp. xiv, ix.

the sorrows of others. Thus it is to be influenced by those who are loved."¹⁷⁴ From the process point of view, being "all loving" means that God participates in each and every quality of experience and that he includes all experiences in his own. This total empathy with the lives of all others reflects the nature of divine love.

The only genuinely loving relationship which traditional thinking generally permits God to have is the love which exists between the members of the Trinity. The Trinity is supposed to give God an object to love which is worthy of being loved and not in conflict with his supposed self-sufficiency. According to Hartshorne, whatever else this love within the Trinity may do, it does not deal with the issue of God's love for the creature. It is irrelevant to the creature whether or not the Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father. What the creature is interested in is whether or not God loves him and whether or not he can really love God.¹⁷⁵

Process thought affirms that God does love the creatures and that the creatures can love God. We have already looked at some ways in which love for the creatures is shown through God's creative act, and we need only review them briefly here.

The giving of the initial aim is an act of love. To love is to desire the good of others, and in the initial aim this desire is fully expressed.¹⁷⁶ We noted earlier how Whitehead saw the final phase of the

¹⁷⁴Hartshorne, A Natural Theology for Our Time, op. cit., p. 75.

¹⁷⁵Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 164

¹⁷⁶Ibid., p. 14.

creative process as what happens when the "perfected actuality" of previous occasions passes back into the world through the initial aim. Whitehead calls this "the love of God for the world"¹⁷⁷ The initial aim expresses God's desire for the creatures good because it presents the creature with the best concrescence it could attain, the most intense, harmonious experience possible.

It would be difficult to think of God as being all loving if he created each entity with an excellent initial purpose and did not also make it possible for the entity to achieve that purpose. In process thought, divine love insures that the possibility of attaining what God intends outweighs the possibility of its non-attainment.¹⁷⁸ We saw how it was part of God's providential care for each entity, to place it in an environment that would be supportive of it. This providential care does not mean that risk is eliminated but rather that the opportunities for good dominate the risks of evil.

A third dimension of the love expressed in God's creative act is that it is persuasion and not coercion.¹⁷⁹ God guarantees creaturely freedom. This is not absolute freedom for such would not be supportive of the creature. The limitations he places on the creatures self-creation are those that are necessary to insure the possibility of a good synthesis. They are the "optimal limits for free action."¹⁸⁰ God however, does not force the entity to have a good synthesis. The

¹⁷⁷Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 532.

¹⁷⁸See above, p. 246.

¹⁷⁹See above, p. 174.

¹⁸⁰Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 142.

entity may choose less than God's intended best. Divine love does not deny this freedom.

CONCLUSIONS

We began this chapter by noting Cobb's suggestion that Whiteheadian thinking might have more points of contact with traditional thought than either its advocates or its critics realize. In this chapter this observation has been verified. While there are profound differences between process and traditional thought--differences as basic as whether being or becoming is primary, and whether God is monopolar or dipolar--process thought is able, in its own way, to make the same affirmations about creation as is traditional theology. The content of these affirmations, however, is often transformed. That the affirmations mean different things to process theologians than to traditional theologians, does not mean that process thought does not articulate an adequate doctrine of creation, for, as we discovered in the first chapter, traditional theology does not present a unified conceptualization of what the affirmations mean. There is a great variety, and process thought should at least be considered as a legitimate variation.

Our interpretation and expansion of process thought has led us to formulate a strong doctrine of God the Creator. The process doctrine of God the Creator is based on the understanding that being a creator is the basic description of God's nature and of his relationship to the cosmos. "To be is to create" expresses the process understanding of reality. God, who is the "Supreme Being" in traditional theologies, is the "Supreme Creator" in process thought. All creation

is seen as being part of his divine self-creation wherein he synthesizes all that is created in the cosmos, and on the basis of this, creates new possibilities for the cosmos. God is "Creativity Itself" and as such, creates the creativity of others. This is accomplished through his superjective nature which we have identified both with Whitehead's concept of creativity and the traditional Christian concept of the Logos, the Word of God.

Creation in process thought is creatio per verbum. As we have seen, process thought provides an excellent articulation of this ancient doctrine. To do this, however, it is necessary to modify Whitehead's concept of creativity to see creativity as part of God rather than an ultimate metaphysical principle holding God and everything else in its grasp.

The agreement between process and traditional thought on creatio per verbum does not extend to the other great expression of the doctrine of creation--creatio ex nihilo. The incompatibility between this idea and process thought is irreconcilable. The process model is one of entities creating themselves out of the data they inherit from their predecessors. Process thought holds firmly to the notion that nothing comes from nothing, and each stage of creation is seen as being built out of the preceeding stage. The idea of a first stage of creation can only refer to the emergence of a particular cosmic epoch. The notion of creation out of chaos is much closer to the process view.

When process thought affirms that God is the source of all existence and creation is totally dependent on him, it is noting the importance of the initial aim which God provides for each entity. This

initial aim is the "gift of becoming" for it begins the entity's self-creative process. Without the initiation the entity would not have its concrecence. The initial aim constitutes the entity's first moment of subjectivity as well as determining what data it will inherit for its self-creation. Each instance of creation is dependent totally on God. Providence is seen as God's maximizing the opportunities each entity has for an intense and harmonious concrecence. It further testifies to God's limiting the concrecences which do take place so there is always the greatest possibility of value being attained for the entity personally and value being contributed to the cosmos in general.

Because of God's providence, the creature finds himself in a supportive environment, and the cosmos finds itself ordered in such a way that the threat of chaos is averted. Divine providence in no way negates the creatures' freedom but rather guarantees it by insuring that each entity will have the best chance possible for achieving a high level of satisfaction in its concrecence.

That the creation is distinct from God and, even though corrupted by sin, is fundamentally good, must be viewed panentheistically. Process thought sees all that happens in the cosmos as being included in God. The cosmos is not identical with him, however, for in his self-creation he transforms all that has been created. God is the cosmos plus his own synthesis of it. He can, therefore, both include the cosmos and transcend it.

The problem of evil is regarded as a "pseudo-problem" for a philosophical standpoint, because the cause of evil is also the source

of good. This is the freedom for self-creation that has been given each entity. God the Creator is not God the dictator. Although he creates an entity with purpose, the entity does not have to follow God's lead and can do whatever it wants to do with its concrescence. There is always the implicit risk that the entity will become less than intended and something which is, to some extent, destructive of the society in which it is found. Evil must not be seen only in terms of creating discord but more in terms of trivial attainment. This is the failure of an entity to achieve as rich and full an experience as God purposes. Of the two types of evil, this is, for process thought, the worse because it deprives the cosmos of some value which is needed for the cosmic advance. The sheer impossibility of a world without the possibility of evil is underlined by process thinkers. The possibility of evil is simply the other side of the opportunity for good. If one is diminished, so is the other. This means that creation is risky, and evil, in one form or another, is bound to occur--not because God wills it but because he allows the creature freedom to do what it wants. God is not, however, indifferent to the occurrence of evil. First, he lures the creature toward a concrescence that is the best possible, and secondly, he ameliorates, as much as possible, whatever is destructive in an entity's concrescence in his own synthesis of the data he receives. On the basis of this harmony he issues a new initial aim that permits the entity to work with God in eliminating the effects of whatever evil has occurred.

Affirming that the creation is a free act of God's gracious love, would at first seem difficult for process thinkers because they hold to

the necessity of there being a creation. God must have data for his own self-creation, and this demands some sort of creation. It does not, however, demand any particular creation. Here is where God's freedom lies. It is his decision just what entities he will create and what sort of order he will impose on the cosmic structure. He is not forced to initiate any one particular concrescence. As concerns his love for creation, process thought finds a perfect coincidence of self-love and love of others in God's creating. Whatever he creates will eventually affect him; therefore, he creates with the purpose of having the best possible data to use in his own self-creation. What is best for him is also best for the creature because it will provide the entity with the possibility of attaining a high level of value. The more value a creature achieves, the more value it can contribute to God.

The process concept of creation puts forward the notion of God's sharing his creativity with his creatures and guaranteeing them the opportunity to exercise their creativity. There is expressed what could be called a partnership in the enterprise of creation. In this partnership there is no doubt that God is the "senior partner." He creates all entities and includes all of them in his self-creation. Each creature creates only a few other entities and is included only in a few others in its self-creation. Still, God and his creatures are co-creators of themselves and of each other. There is a reciprocal relationship. This gives genuine meaning to creaturely existence for the creature can make a contribution to the Kingdom of God by what it does each moment of its existence. It can glorify God through the fulfilling of God's intention expressed in the initial aim. When this happens, God's will is done "on earth as it is in heaven."

Chapter 4

ANALOGY IN TRADITIONAL THEOLOGY AND PROCESS THOUGHT

Due to the nature of the subject and and those who discuss it, talking about God is inherently difficult and in some philosophical circles has fallen into disrepute. Religious language is regarded by some as nonsense, having no intelligible meaning and should, therefore, be abandoned or ignored by philosophers. While many have not accepted this conclusion and continue to talk about God, linguistic analysis has forced them to scrutinize carefully what they are saying and to provide a patient and thorough accounting of the language they use.

In this dissertation, we have been talking about God, particularly about him as creator and, from the process perspective, creature. The assumption has been that our talk makes sense and that what we are saying is meaningful. This is too great an assumption and needs the careful scrutiny suggested above. It is important that we understand the way we are using language, especially when a common characteristic is predicated of both God and other actualities. When this is done, it is generally noted that the term is being used analogically. As the subject of analogy is a topic for dissertation in its own right, what we say here will be somewhat cursory in nature. It will, however, point up the important issues and indicate the substance of the process contribution to the discussion.

ANALOGY IN TRADITIONAL THEOLOGY

For traditional theology, the via analogia is a way out of a dilemma. On the one hand, God is utterly transcendent and, therefore, beyond human understanding and conceptualization. His being and nature are beyond a person's powers of comprehension. God is not another creature, another being among beings. Because of this, he should not be discussed in language and concepts drawn from ordinary experience. On the other hand, all we have as creatures, beings among beings, is our every day, mundane language in which to conceive--or receive--and express our understanding of God. There is for theology the unavoidable need to talk about God and the unavoidable need to do it in human language. If human language is not used, man cannot talk at all; but because God is not man, man's language is by its nature inappropriate and must, therefore, be radically qualified when used in reference to God. The only alternative to this is the via negativa which, while useful in denying strictly creaturely predicates of God, would lead eventually to total agnosticism. One could affirm nothing at all about God.¹

Analogy, quite understandably, plays a far more significant role in the thinking of those who accept natural theology than in those who rely on revelation. For natural theology it is not only a question of linguistics, how the transcendent God can be discussed

¹E. L. Mascall, Existence and Analogy, (London: Darlton, Logman and Todd, 1949), p. 92; Gilkey, Maker of Heaven and Earth, op. cit., p. 99; and A.M. Farrer, Finite and Infinite, (London: Dacre Press, 1943), p. 2.

in mundane, human language, but also the metaphysical question of how God's existence can be perceived through the existence of finite things and how he is related to them. Farrer calls this the "cosmological idea," "the scheme of God and the creature in relation."² Even though more strongly advocated by natural theologians, the most ardent and articulate revelationist of this century, Karl Barth, has fully recognized the dilemma of speaking about God in human language and "pressed by the true revelation of God" has been "pushed" to the concept of analogy. "Between our views, concepts and words, and God as their object," he says, "there exists, on the basis of revelation of God, the relationship of analogy On the basis of this similarity, there is a true human knowledge of God."³

Univocity, Equivocity and Analogy

The via analogia is a via media between univocity and equivocity. Univocity and equivocity are easier to define than analogy. Univocity is predication of one term in an identical way of two different subjects. Equivocity would be to use the term with completely different meanings. Mascall illustrates the difference with these examples: When we call a Great Dane and a Pomeranian 'dogs' we mean exactly the same things about each of them. Dog is predicated univocally. The characteristics that distinguish the two dogs from each other are additions to their common caninity. Certain other words have vastly different meanings

²Farrer, op. cit., p. 16, cited by Mascall, op. cit., p. 93.

³Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics II/2, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), pp. 226, 227.

depending on their referent. The word 'mug' can describe a certain type of cup and a victim of fraud. Mug is predicated equivocally.⁴

Multiplying examples of these two forms of predication will not enhance our present discussion greatly. Their importance is in being the alternatives which the doctrine of analogy supplants. We can, perhaps, encapsulate them by saying that in univocity the term transcends whatever referent it has. Neither Great Dane nor Pomeranian is completely definitive of dog. In equivocality the term is completely subordinate to its referents. A type of drinking cup and a victim of fraud each defines a different thing as being a mug. In univocity, the term is unchanged in meaning regardless of the referent. In equivocality, its meaning changes totally.

Traditional theology has never accepted either of these alternatives. We do not speak of God and man univocally or equivocally. To accept the first would be to denigrate God to the status of a creature through generic predication. To accept the latter would in fact deny any relationship at all between God and the world.⁵ Barth's terms for univocity and equivocality are parity and disparity respectively. By the use of analogy, he says,

Both the thesis of parity and the equally false thesis of disparity were attacked and destroyed, but the elements of truth in both were revealed. It could therefore be claimed as the correct definition of the matter. In distinction to both likeness and unlikeness 'analogy' means similarity, i.e., partial correspondence and agreement (and, therefore,

⁴Mascall, op. cit., p. 97.

⁵See Aquinas, Summa contra Gentiles, op. cit., I.37; and Summa Theologiae, op. cit., I.13.5c.

one which limits both parity and disparity between two or more different entities.)⁶

What Barth sees as constituting this correspondence will soon be discussed as well as that all important qualification 'partial,' but first we turn to Thomas Aquinas who formally introduced the concept of analogy to theology.

Thomas' Concepts of Analogy

The basic classification made by St. Thomas, at least in the two 'Summae' is that of analogy duorum ad tertium and analogy unius ad alterum:

Names said of God and creatures are predicated neither univocally nor equivocally but rather analogically, that is according to an order or reference to something one. This can take place in two ways. In one way, according as many things have reference to something one In another way, the analogy can obtain as the order or reference of two things is not to something else but to one of them.⁷

Duorum ad tertium. The analogy of two to a third (duorum ad tertium) is an analogy between two beings because of the relationship each bears to a third thing. Aquinas' example, which remains the standard illustration, is 'health.' "With reference to one health we say that an animal is healthy as the subject of health, medicine is healthy as its cause, food as its preserver, and urine as its sign."⁸ When we say that food and medicine are healthy, we realize that the term "healthy" cannot apply properly to either of them but

⁶Barth, Church Dogmatics, II/1, op. cit., p. 225.

⁷Aquinas, Summa contra Gentiles, op. cit., I.34; also Summa Theologica, op. cit., I.13.5c.

⁸Ibid.; also see Mascall, Existence and Analogy, op. cit., p. 101.

only by reference to the health itself, the thing caused by the medicine and sustained by the food. Healthy can only be 'formally' predicated of the animal which actually possesses health. The animal is the prime analogate since the term healthy applies primarily to him. The other analogates are secondary and the term healthy can be applied to them only with reference to the prime analogate. The analogy between healthy medicine and healthy food is two to a third.

As Aquinas points out, the analogy of two to a third can have no application when we attribute to both God and the creature the same predicate.⁹ There is nothing prior to God which the predicate could more formally or more properly apply. Here, as in univocity, God's superiority and transcendence would be seriously compromised because he would be subjected to generic predication and, therefore, held on the same level as the other analogates. We must, due to the inadequacy of analogy duorum ad tertium, look to the second type of analogy, analogy unius ad alterum, as the way of attributing a common perfection to God and the creature.

Unius ad alterum. The analogy of one to another (unius ad alterum) is not founded on the relationship each analogue bears to a third term but upon the relationship one analogue bears to the other. Thomas' example in the passage we've been citing is 'being.' "Being is said of substance and accident according as an accident has reference to a substance and not according as substance and accident are referred to a third thing."¹⁰ The method of such predication is that of priority and posteriority.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Now nothing is predicated of God and creatures as though they were of the same order but according to priority and posteriority. For all things are predicated of God essentially . . . but in other beings predication is made by participation, as Socrates is said to be a man, not because he is humanity itself but because he possesses humanity.¹¹

The problem in analogy two to a third, the denigration of God's transcendence, is avoided in analogy of one to the other because the predicate, according to priority and posteriority, belongs to God essentially and to the creature only through his participation in the predicate. This is always true of the God-creature relationship; it is not true of the relationship between creatures when they participate in a perfection also predicated of God. The analogy between them is always two to a third. The fundamental analogical predication between God and the creature is always analogy unius ad alterum.¹²

Analogies of attribution and proportionality. The analogy unius ad alterum subdivides into two types: the analogy of attribution, and the analogy of proportionality. Protestants, generally speaking, have accepted one form of attribution (extrinsic denomination) as the fundamental analogy between God and the creature.¹³

¹¹ Ibid., p. 22.

¹² It should be mentioned that in his earlier writing, Thomas speaks of predication by priority and posteriority only in reference to the analogy of two to a third and, therefore, excludes it from the predication of divine attributes. (I Sentences, 19) As indicated above, this is not his view in later writings.

¹³ Barth appears to me to be mistaken in attributing to Quenstedt considerable accuracy in summarizing the thought of the Reformers. In the Reformers, as we shall see, attribution is extrinsic not as in Quenstedt where it is intrinsic. In this respect,

Roman Catholics have, with considerable unanimity, accepted proportionality. Recently, proposals have been made from both sides that the two should be used in conjunction with each other. We will look at this in a moment, but first each analogy must be approached on its own.

The analogy of attribution. The analogy of attribution (also called the analogy of proportion) describes the relationship between entities which, even though different, are in some respect similar in that they are related, even if by different relations, to one identical thing. To return to the example of 'health,' health can be predicated by attribution. When the term is predicated analogically of the animal having health, the medicine which gives or restores health to the animal, and the complexion or urine of an animal which is the sign of its health, it is the health of the animal that is being referred to in each case. Health is realized formally and properly only in the animal itself and is attributed or proportioned to the other analogates. As opposed to the analogy of two to a third in which all analogates are related to another term, in attribution the prime analogate actually possesses the attribute.¹⁴

John McIntyre lists four properties of this type of analogy. The most important property is that the attribute is realized formally only in the prime analogate and referred to the others by extrinsic denomination from the former. Secondly, the 'analogous formality' is

Quenstedt does not seem to summarize Reformed thought, either before or after him. Barth, Church Dogmatics II/2, op. cit., pp. 237-241.

¹⁴ See McIntyre, "Analogy," Scottish Journal of Theology, XII, (1959), p. 6ff, for a concise discussion of the forms of analogy.

numerically one, not logically or conceptually. Thirdly, the definition of the secondary analogate must include reference to the prime analogate from which it derives the name. Finally, the common predicate has a different meaning in relation to the different analogates but the common reference prevents these meanings from being completely disparate.¹⁵

In outlining these four properties, McIntyre is summarizing the views of J. F. Anderson who follows Cajetan's interpretation of St. Thomas.¹⁶ Cajetan's is unquestionably the majority view within the Thomist tradition and is often presented as the only perspective. There is, however, another interpretation of Thomas, first put forward by Suarez, which presents a distinctly different view of the analogy of attribution. Let us look briefly at both of these.

Cardinal Cajetan uses as the foundation for his interpretation of Thomas' teaching on analogy, an early text found in the First Book of the Sentences, where Thomas speaks of analogy according to intention but not according to being, analogy according to being but not according to intention, and analogy according to intention and according to being.¹⁷ Cajetan fits all other divisions and distinctions of analogy found in Thomas, into this schema. Analogy according to being and not according to intention is discussed first, and Cajetan calls it the analogy of inequality. Because this involves

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁶ See Anderson, The Bond of Being: An Essay on Analogy and Existence, (St. Louis: B. Herder Books, 1954.)

¹⁷ Aquinas, I Sentences, 19.5.2.1., cited by G. P. Klubertanz, St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy, pp. 7-10.

generic predication, Cajetan disqualifies it as being a proper mode of analogy. Analogy according to intention but not according to being is what Cajetan calls the analogy of attribution. By this identification attribution cannot be other than extrinsic denomination as regards the secondary analogates. Here Thomas uses the example of health for his illustration. Analogy according to intention and according to being, Cajetan calls the analogy of proportionality which he identifies with the analogy discussed in De Veritate.¹⁸ This latter is for Cajetan the only truly proper type of analogy since it is the only one in which each of the analogates intrinsically possess the analogous perfection which is proportionately similar in all the analogates. The analogy of proportionality will be discussed in detail shortly.

Francis Suarez contends that Thomas teaches not only an analogy of extrinsic attribution but also an analogy of intrinsic attribution.¹⁹ As opposed to the prime analogate being the only analogate possessing the predicate formally, in intrinsic attribution all analogates possess the predicate formally. The prime analogate possesses it absolutely, and the secondary analogates possess it relatively through their relationship to the prime analogate. Suarez feels this is the type of attribution used by Aquinas in his predicate of being to both substance and accident. Substance is being in a primary and absolute sense, and accident is being in a secondary and relative

¹⁸ Aquinas, De Veritate, 2.11., cited by Klubertanz, loc. cit.

¹⁹ Francis Suarez, Disputationes Metaphysicae, 27, discussed by Battista Mondin, The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), p. 40f.

sense not just because of external domination by the being of substance but because it possesses its own proper being. Establishing this, Suarez then claims that the analogy between God and creatures is intrinsic attribution. Proportionality does not deserve the prominence it has in Cajetan's system. Before this claim can be evaluated, we must look at proportionality as traditionally defined.

Even though they reject intrinsic attribution, the Cajetanists do accept an analogy of intrinsic denomination, the analogy of proper proportionality. In proportionality there is a direct relationship of the modes in which a perfection is realized in various beings to the beings in which it is realized. There is not necessarily any reference to a prime analogate. An Aristotelian example which Thomas uses is the term 'good.' Good is predicated of different things proportionately by virtue of each fulfilling his own individual goodness, his 'telos,' not because they are related to a prime analogate in which goodness is formally realized. Each analogate possess goodness formally but a goodness that is appropriate to its existence. There is no suggestion of univocity, for goodness means different things when predicated of different subjects.²⁰ Mascall illustrates the analogy of proportionality with the term 'life.'²¹

Cabbages, elephants, men and God can be said to possess life formally in the sense that each is quite literally, unsymbolically

²⁰ McIntyre, "Analogy," op. cit., p. 9f.

²¹ Mascall, Existence and Analogy, op. cit., p. 103f.

alive, but each is alive in a way that is appropriate to itself. A cabbage's life is proper to being a cabbage, an elephant's life to being an elephant, a man's life to being a man, and God's life to being God. Analogies of proportionality can be expressed by the formula $A/B :: C/D$. Substituting the examples cited above we find:

$\frac{\text{life of cabbage}}{\text{essence of cabbage}} :: \frac{\text{life of elephant}}{\text{essence of elephant}} :: \frac{\text{life of man}}{\text{essence of man}} :: \frac{\text{life of God}}{\text{essence of God}}$

We would be in error to interpret this formula mathematically rather than philosophically. In this case the equals sign does not imply equality. The life of the cabbage is not determined by the essence of the cabbage in the same way that God's life is determined by his essence. Rather, a cabbage's life is determined in a way that is proper to being a cabbage, and God's life is determined in a way that is proper to God. As McIntyre points out, in proportionality, "the similarity lies not in the attributes of the terms but in the relationships that hold between them."²²

As noted in our brief glance at Suarez and Cajetan, the debate rages among the Thomists as to whether intrinsic attribution or proportionality is the correct type of analogy to describe the relationship between Creator and creature. The Thomists' belief that any such relationship does in fact exist comes from their acceptance that between God and man there exists an analogia entis. Although a precise definition of this analogia entis depends on how one regards proportionality and attribution, some mutually acceptable background information can be supplied.

²² McIntyre, "Analogy," op. cit., p. 10.

The 'analogia entis.' For Thomist thought, the analogia entis is the fundamental analogy. It is the foundation for all thought concerning the relationship between God and man. Since God and man are related by being beings, other relationships can and do exist between them.

Translating the phrase, analogia entis, creates a problem. The usual rendering as 'similarity of being' has for some people implied a continuity of being--that God's being is identical with ours. As we shall see, Thomas goes to great lengths to exclude this possibility. It is, after all, an analogy, and one of the purposes of analogy is to avoid univocal predication. If the analogia entis implies ontological continuity, it is not an analogy.²³ Assuming that it is an analogy, certain essential features of it must be noted.

The analogia entis is an analogy of intrinsic denomination. Both God and the creature formally possess being; it is proper to both their natures. Aquinas makes this point repeatedly: Creatures resemble God by some analogy because the very act of existing is common to both of them.²⁴ This point is usually expressed in terms of God being 'existence itself' and the creature 'participating in being.' God is being; the creature has being.²⁵

The 'participation' of the creature in God is found throughout Thomas' writings and the concept requires some clarification.

²³ See McIntyre, "Analogy," op. cit., p. 11.

²⁴ Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, op. cit. I.4.3c; I.14.9.2.

²⁵ Thomas Aquinas, "Since God is existence itself, each thing participates in a likeness of God inasmuch as it exists." Summa Theologiae, op. cit., I.14.9.2.; also Summa contra Gentiles, op. cit., II.53.

Thomas points out that two things may participate in a common characteristic or one may simply participate in a characteristic of another insofar as it is possible for it to do so. This is the agreement which exists between the creature and God. "Being is predicated essentially only of God, since the divine esse is subsistent and absolute. Being is predicated of all creatures by participation: no creature is its own existence, but rather is a being which has existence."²⁶ There is no doubt that participation does not mean full or adequate possession. Participation is always coupled with the idea that the creature has a less perfect or deficient possession of being. Since God has the perfection essentially and the creature only by participation, there is no univocal predication.

Since God is being and the creature only has being, being is predicated per prius et posterius. "Nothing is predicated of God and other things according to the same order but rather according to priority and posteriority."²⁷ Predication according to priority and posteriority does not occur in univocal predication where the term can apply equally to any species within the genus. Even though being may be predicated of both God and the creature, it is more properly predicated of God. This method of predication is what distinguishes analogies of two to a third from analogies of one to the other. By predicating being of God priorly, we establish that

²⁶ Thomas Aquinas, Quaestiones Quodlibetales II, I.10.22.1. cited by Klubertanz, op. cit., p. 60.

²⁷ Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra Gentiles, op. cit., I.32.

he is the prime analogate and all references to being are most properly references to him and his being.

What we have seen about the analogia entis so far is that it is an analogy of intrinsic denomination since both God and the creature actually have being, but this does not mean that they have the same being. God is being and, therefore, possesses it antecedently to the creature. The creature participates in being and, therefore, has it in a deficient or inferior way. These distinctions become clearer when we look at the most important aspect of the analogia entis--the fact that it is established by a creative act of God.

The creation of the analogia entis. The analogia entis refers primarily to creation. God, who is being itself, has created creatures who have being. The act of creation is the communication of being from God to his creatures. Thomas discusses the creation of being in terms of causality.

To Thomas, it seemed almost self-evident that omne agens agit simile sibi, all causes produce effects similar to themselves.²⁸ This is the universal principle of all causality. Applied to God it means that God creates a world that is somehow and in some way similar to him. This is the basis of the analogia entis. The most frequent way in which Thomas expresses the similarity between God and his creatures is by the causal relationship. Creatures have some resemblance to God because they are proportioned to him as effects to their cause. A cause cannot produce effects of any sort but only

²⁸ Aquinas, De Potentia, op. cit., 2.2., 7.5., Summa contra Gentiles, op. cit., II.21.8., 22.5., 40.2., 43.8., and Summa Theologica, op. cit., I.5.3.

effects according to its nature. This means the activity of a cause is restricted to a fixed, limited sphere of effects and can cause only those effects and no others.

Causality is not a simple situation. Effects do resemble their causes, but these resemblances can be of various kinds depending on the type of similarity which exists between the effect and its cause. Usually, Thomas speaks of two basic types: univocal and equivocal. Both are present in this statement:

The form of the effect is in the natural agent inasmuch as the agent produces an effect of like nature, since every agent produces its like. Now this happens in two ways. When the effect bears a perfect likeness to the agent, as proportionate to the agent's power, then the form of the effect is in the agent to the same degree, thus it is in univocal agents, for instance fire generates fire. When, however, the effect is not perfectly likened to the agent, as being improportionate to the agent's power, then the form of the effect is not in the same degree in the agent but in a higher degree: this is the case in equivocal agents, for instance the sun generates fire.²⁹

Theologically speaking, God is the supreme cause, and it is, therefore, proper that he will bring forth effects like himself, but in so doing God is always an equivocal--not a univocal--cause as witnessed by the fact that all creatures fall short of his perfections.³⁰

Occasionally, Thomas speaks of three basic types of causality. In these passages God is neither univocal nor equivocal cause, but analogical.

²⁹ Aquinas, De Potentia, op. cit., 7.1.8. Also, Summa Theologica, op. cit., 1.105.1.1.

³⁰ Aquinas, Summa contra Gentiles, op. cit., I.29 & 31, III 7.2., Also, Summa Theologica, 1.13.5.

We find three kinds of efficient causes. The first of these is an equivocal cause, whose effect agrees with it neither in name nor in intelligibility. The sun, for instance, produces heat although it itself is not hot. The second kind is a univocal cause, whose effect agrees with it in name and intelligibility. A man, for instance, generates a man and heat produces heat. God's activity is neither equivocal nor univocal. Not univocal, because nothing univocally agrees with him. Not equivocal, because effect and cause somehow agree here in name and intelligibility, according to priority and posteriority. God for instance, by his wisdom makes us wise, but only in such a way that our wisdom always falls short of the perfection of his wisdom, just as an accident falls short of the perfection of being, as this is found in substance. Thus, the third kind of cause is an analogous agent. It is clear, then, that the Divine Being produces the being of the creature as an imperfect likeness of itself.³¹

Thomas makes this distinction only in his earlier writing. In later ones analogical causes appear to be assumed under equivocal causes. Thomas does, however, in his later writings, make a distinction which conveys the same idea. God is the cause of certain perfections because he possesses them virtually, others because he possesses them formally.

Virtual possession of a perfection means that God would not necessarily possess the perfection formally but only in such a way that he is able to produce that perfection in his creatures. This seems to compromise the principle of omne agens agit simile sibi which implies that effects are to some extent pre-contained in their causes. Thomas would contend, however, that virtual possession of a perfection is a valid way of containing that perfection, for perfections do not have to be contained in the same way by cause and effect unless the cause is a univocal cause.³²

³¹I Sentences, op. cit., 8.1.2c.

³²Mascall, Existence and Analogy, op. cit., p. 102.

Formal possession of a perfection means that God actually contains some form of the perfection within himself. Again, this does not mean that as cause, God possesses the perfection in the same form as the creature, his effect. Indeed, this is never the case. God always possesses the perfection in a more eminent form, in a superior mode, to the creature.

Thomas maintains that the principle "all causes produce effects similar to themselves" is valid but only in a restricted sense. He places three restrictions on the meaning of the term "cause" if the principle is to be accurate: (a) Causes in this principle must be causes per se and not per accidens. Modin's clarification of this distinction is helpful.

A cause is said to be per se or natural when it produces an effect according to its proper end. A cause is said to be per accidens or accidental when there attaches either to it or to its effect, some characteristic or event that is incidental, something not included in the scope of assimilating the end to itself.³³

(b) Causes must be principal causes and not just instrumental causes. To cite Mondin again, "A cause is said to be principal if it acts by its own native power. A cause is said to be instrumental if it acts by the power of the principal cause that employs it." (My typewriter is the instrumental cause of this dissertation; I am its principal cause.) (c) Causes produce effects like themselves only inasmuch as they are the cause of the effect and the effect is

³³Mondin, op. cit., p. 89.

not the result of other causes.³⁴ The likeness any one effect bears to any one cause can be modified by other causal factors. (The fact that an egg turns hard when boiled is the result of at least two factors--heat, which does not necessarily make things hard, and the substance of the egg, which does not turn hard on its own.)

According to Aquinas, God is the most important instance of the principle causa agens agit simile sibi. God is the primary and per se cause of all things. As such, he brings out effects like himself.³⁵ He is not, as we have seen, a univocal cause but rather an equivocal cause; therefore, each creature falls short of the divine perfections.³⁶ Even so, man can predicate common terms of God and himself, but because God possesses the perfections either virtually or formally or eminently, the predication must, in application to God, be qualified. Perfections which God possesses virtually are predicated of him metaphorically. A frequent case of this is in discussing God's dynamic attributes, perfections relevant to external action (anger, repentance, etc.) This is the most common mode of Biblical predication.³⁷

³⁴ Aquinas in De Potentia, 7.5.8, discusses the proper effects of primary and secondary causes.

³⁵ Aquinas, I Sentences, op. cit., 3.1.3; Also Summa contra Gentiles, op. cit., I.29.; Summa Theologiae, op. cit., I.4.2. I am greatly indebted to Mondin, op. cit., pp. 93-94, for this summary.

³⁶ See above, p. 318.

³⁷ See Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, op. cit., I.13.3.1; also Summa contra Gentiles, op. cit., I.30.

Perfections which God possesses eminently merit special consideration because it is the way in which Thomas most frequently discusses the relationship between creature and Creator.

The way of eminence. A discussion of the via eminentia³⁸ will draw together much of what we have already said about the relationship between God and his creatures which is established by creatures being proportioned to God as effects to the supreme cause. Basically, the relationship thus established is one of causal eminence meaning that which is received in the creature exists in the Creator in a more perfect and noble manner. From the massive number of texts that speak in this manner, this quotation from the First Book of the Sentences expresses the situation clearly:

(Dionysius) says that we go from creatures to God by three ways: through causality, through negation, and through eminence. The reason for this is that the being of the creature is from another. Hence, we are led to the cause from which it comes. This can happen in two ways. With respect to the perfection which it receives, we are led by the way of causality. With respect to the manner in which it is received (namely, that it is imperfectly received), we are led by two paths: by negation or removal of the imperfection from God and by way of eminence, inasmuch as that which is received in the creature exists in the Creator in a more perfect and noble manner.³⁸

What precisely is meant by a perfection existing in God in a more eminent way is spelled out by Thomas. Two further distinctions will help clarify matters.

³⁸ I Sentences, op. cit., 3. Similar statements can be found in De Veritate, IV. 6c; De Potentia, VII. 5.2.; 5.8; Summa Theologiae, op. cit., I.4.2c; 13.2.2.; 13.3c; 29.3c.1.; At least two dozen additional references are given by Klubertanz, op. cit., pp. 73-74.

Thomas distinguishes between two types of perfections--specific (or mixed) and simple (or analogous.) The first of these denote a perfection taken precisely as it appears in a particular finite mode of realization. These 'specific' perfections can only be formally realized in the creature. God possesses them only virtually and, therefore, they are predicated of him metaphorically.³⁹ These perfections are characteristic of certain creatures and could in no way be predicated of them all. Because of their limited applicability they could not be regarded as either universal or transcendental. They depend on a specific mode of realization for their intelligibility. Other perfections can be understood without specific reference to any form of realization. Because of this their transcendental nature, they can be properly predicated of God.⁴⁰ Very few terms can be predicated in this way. Scholastic thought isolated six primary notions which could be called transcendental perfections--ens, res, unum, aliquid, verum, and bonum.⁴¹

These simple perfections can be properly predicated of God only if another distinction is made-- a distinction between the res significata and the modus significandi. Simple perfections can be predicated of God only in regard to the perfection itself, the thing signified, and not in regard to any form of predication. The

³⁹ Aquinas, Summa Theologica, op. cit., I.13.3.1.; I Sentences, op. cit., 22.1.2.; Summa contra Gentiles, op. cit., I.30.

⁴⁰ Aquinas, Summa Theologica, op. cit., I.13.3.1.

⁴¹ See Mascall, Existence and Analogy, op. cit., p. 98. Thomas does not present such a closed list. He also gives no criteria for determining whether or not a perfection is transcendental and, it appears, would prefer to approach each perfection on its own merit.

perfection is, therefore, attributed to God in an absolute sense. We are not suggesting any mode of realization when we attribute a simple perfection to God. When the perfection is attributed to anything else, some mode of existence is always referred to.

We can attribute simple perfections to God in an absolute sense, but this poses a problem. We have no experience of a simple perfection in the absolute sense of the word. Creatures cannot know any perfection outside of some particular creaturely mode of realization. Therefore, Thomas says that even though God possesses the attribute eminently and is the prime analogate as far as the perfection itself is concerned, as far as our knowledge of the perfection is concerned, we know the perfection primarily through the creature. To quote the Summa Theologica:

For when God is called good or wise, this signifies not only that he is the cause of wisdom and goodness but also that these perfections exist in him in a higher way. In the light of these considerations, then, it must be maintained that, as far as the reality signified is concerned, these predications are made antecedently of God rather than of creatures, because perfections of this sort flow from God to creatures. As far as the imposition of the name is concerned, however, creatures are named first, because we know them first.⁴²

Mondin explains Thomas in this manner:

All names, in their mode of signification, apply primarily and properly to creatures, only secondarily and metaphorically to God. But names of simple perfections, with respect of the perfection signified, apply primarily to God and only secondarily to creatures. The reason is that with regard to the mode of signification the primary analogue

⁴² Aquinas, Summa Theologica, op. cit. I.13.6c.

is always a creature, but with regard to the perfection signified, in the case of simple perfections, the primary analogue is God.⁴³

Conclusions. We are now in a position to state some conclusions about the Thomist method of analogical predication as it pertains to the relationship between Creator and creature. (1) God possesses all perfections found in the creature, some virtually, others formally. Those which he possesses virtually are predicated metaphorically of him and formally of the creature. (2) Those which he possesses formally can properly be predicated of both him and the creature. These are called simple perfections and because of their transcendental and univocal nature depend on no particular mode of realization. (3) In making this predication, however, a distinction must be made between the perfection itself and the way in which the perfection is realized. God possesses the perfection in its absolute form; the creature possesses it only in some finite mode. (4) The analogy thus established is that of one to the other with the creature participating in some way in the divine perfection. (5) This participation is the result of the creature having been created by God who as supreme cause produces, according to the principle of cause and effect, creatures bearing some sort of similarity to himself. (6) By God's creative action there is, therefore, established the analogia entis, an analogy of intrinsic

⁴³Mondin, op. cit., p. 96.

denomination wherein God possesses being (and all other simple perfections) in an eminent way and the creature possesses them in a non-eminent, deficient manner.

The choice between intrinsic attribution and proportionality.

Nothing in the above summary has by necessity committed us to a choice between intrinsic attribution and proportionality as being the correct description of the analogia entis. The discussion of these options is certainly one of the greatest controversies within Thomism. It now remains for us to see what arguments are advanced in favor and in opposition to each position.

The majority view is held by the Cajetanists who contend that it is the analogy of proportionality which best expresses Thomas' concept of the analogia entis. Actually, they have not left themselves any other alternative since proportionality is the only analogy of intrinsic denomination they recognize. Two types of criticism are made of the Cajetanist position. The first concerns Cajetan's interpretation of Thomas. The second concerns the analogy of proportionality itself.

As we mentioned previously,⁴⁴ Cajetan bases his interpretation on a text from Thomas' commentary on the First Book of the Sentences. Here Cajetan equates Thomas' analogy according to intention and according to being with the analogy of proportionality as found in De Veritate, 2.11. The critics contend that there is

⁴⁴See above, p. 311.

very little justification for Cajetan's having done this, for there is nothing in the text from the Sentences which calls for such a restriction. True enough, proportionality is an analogy according to intention and according to being, but is it the only one? According to the De Veritate text the answer is, yes. Here Thomas does limit intrinsic denomination to proportionality.

Consequently it must be said that knowledge is predicated neither entirely univocally nor yet purely equivocally of God's knowledge and ours. Instead, it is predicated analogically, or in other words according to a proportion. Now an agreement between things having a proportion can be of two kinds. According to this, two kinds of community can be noted in analogy. There is a certain agreement between things having a proportion to each other because they have a determinate distance between them or some other relation to each other, as two is related to one because it is its double. Sometimes an agreement is also noted between two things between which there is no proportion but rather a likeness of two proportions to each other, as six agrees with four because six is two times three just as four is two times two. The first kind of agreement is one of proportion; the second of proportionality

Because in those terms predicated according to the first kind of analogy there must be some determinate relation between the things to which something is common by analogy, nothing can be predicated analogously of God and the creature according to this type of analogy; for no creature has such a relation to God by which the divine perfection could be determined. But in the second kind of analogy no determinate relation is noted between the things to which something is common by analogy; so according to this kind, nothing prevents us from predi-⁴⁵cating some name analogically of God and creatures.

Critics say that this passage in Thomas is an isolated instance and not typical of his thought generally. Certainly no mention is made of proportionality in the two great Summae. Klubertanz says that

⁴⁵ Aquinas, De Veritate, op. cit., 2.11.

proportionality certainly is a Thomist analogy but only in the sense that it is a doctrine taught by him for a brief period early in his career. Before and after the writing of De Veritate (1256), there are numerous texts teaching various doctrines of analogy but not proportionality. Certainly proportionality cannot be regarded as the Thomist analogy for expressing the analogia entis, the relationship between Creator and creature. Concerning the position in De Veritate, Klubertanz is quite specific. "St. Thomas had not previously held, and would not subsequently hold, proportionality even as a complementary description of the analogy between God and creatures, much less as the only valid description."⁴⁶

These complaints, while important for discussion among Thomists, are not so significant for our present discussion as those made about the analogy of proportionality itself.

The basic problem with the analogy of proportionality is also its chief benefit. It is a relationship between relations. This means that while it makes emphatically clear that there is no ontological continuity between creator and creature, God does not have the same sort of being man has, it says nothing at all about what being means when predicated of God. Since proportionality is not mathematical equality, does any relationship at all exist across or

⁴⁶Klubertanz, op. cit., p. 94. Mascall says that the position in De Veritate can be reconciled with the position in the Summa. Basically this is not opting for proportionality over proportion but for unius ad alternum over duorum ad tertium. Therefore, De Veritate is defining the theological appropriateness of unius ad alternum and not insisting that proportion and proportionality are mutually exclusive. Existence and Analogy, op. cit., p. 114n.

or between the two proportions? Klubertanz says that the inherent weakness of proportionality is that it,

. . . involves either agnosticism about one set of the terms of the proportions involved . . . , or is merely an extrinsic comparison of beings which are known independently from other sources. St. Thomas does not wish to teach a complete agnosticism about God, as is clear from his criticism of doctrines of equivocation. If he rejects all other analogies between God and creatures, it is difficult to see how he can know even that God and creatures possess analogous perfections much less what they are or what the relationship is between God and his perfections.⁴⁷

To put the point in a slightly different way: When an attribute is predicated of both God and the creature, we are attempting to do more than establish a similarity of relations. We also want to establish some similarity of nature. When we say, for example, that God and man are loving and wise, we are trying to say something about love and wisdom. If the analogy is only proportionality, no relationship at all is established between divine and human wisdom, and one wonders if there is any point at all in using a common term.⁴⁸ McIntyre says, "Because the analogy of proportionality is an analogy of relations, it requires to be supplemented by some form of analogy which relates the terms of the analogy."⁴⁹

Mascall, who fundamentally accepts Cajetan's interpretation of Thomas, is well aware of this problem and shows how a relationship between relations can easily become an infinite regress. To return to his example of the relationship between the lives of cabbages,

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 94.

⁴⁸ Mondin, op. cit., p. 69.

⁴⁹ McIntyre, "Analogy," op. cit., p. 14.

elephants, men, and God, Mascall lets "L" stand for "life of" and "E" stand for "essence of," "c" stand for "cabbage" and "m" stand for "man." He substitutes these terms in the formula A/B which signifies "determination of A by B." First, the equivocity of $Lc :: Lm$ is denied and the proportionality of $Lc/Ec :: Lm/Em$ is substituted. This formula must, however, be further qualified so as not to suggest equality between the two terms. Therefore, $(Lc/Ec)/Ec :: (Lm/Em)/Em$. But as soon as this is established it must be further qualified $\left[\frac{(Lc/Ec)}{Ec} \right] / Ec :: \left[\frac{(Lm/Em)}{Em} \right] / Em$. This process would go on without end, and proportionality would become nothing more than a series of affirmations which would instantly have to be negated. No real relationship between cabbages and men (or men and God) could be established, and "all we are left with is the fact that cabbages have nothing in common with men except the fact that, for no valid reason, men have described them both as being alive."⁵⁰

Klubertanz summarizes the objections to proportionality as the expression of the Creator-creature relationship by saying that we are given the choice among three undesirable possibilities: (a) either we have complete agnosticism about God, or (b) we make proportionality secondary to a more direct analogous knowledge of God, or (c) we are content with rather trivial statement about God. Klubertanz believes that Thomas could not have accepted any of these possibilities, and this is a logical reason for his abandoning proportionality.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Mascall, Existence and Analogy, op. cit., pp. 105-6. Ferre, op. cit., also believes that proportionality is incapable of saying much about the analogates.

⁵¹ Klubertanz, op. cit., pp. 98-9.

We have already noted Suarez's basic objections to the Cajetanist position and his insistence that Thomas teaches intrinsic as well as extrinsic attribution. Intrinsic attribution is, furthermore, the correct analogy to express the analogia entis. Proportionality is rejected because it always includes an element of metaphor. This being the case, there is no analogia entis, for God alone properly has being. The only reason that there can be an analogia entis for God and the creature is to attribute being to them both without saying anything about proportionality.⁵²

The first complaint against Suarez is that he does not understand proportionality. He identifies all proportionality with extrinsic proportionality. (Just as the Cajetanists see proportionality as the only analogy of intrinsic denomination, so Suarez and his followers see attribution as the only analogy of intrinsic denomination.) Proper proportionality does in fact intrinsically attribute being to the creature but only being that is proper to its nature.

The second complaint concerns the "non-Thomistic character of Suarezian analogy." Suarez holds that between divine being and creaturely being there is an analogy of intrinsic attribution. The creature is a being-by-participation while God is Being-by-essence; therefore, the creature participates in being only through dependence upon God and in subordination to him. According to Anderson, this relationship of dependence of the creature on the creator is real but

⁵²Here I am following J. F. Anderson's discussion and critique of Suarez. See Anderson, op. cit., pp. 106-118.

it is not that which primarily distinguishes these two orders of being. This relationship in and of itself does not constitute the being of the creature. He quotes St. Thomas:

Although relation to its cause does not enter the definition of the thing caused, nevertheless that relation follows from the very notion of that thing: for from the fact that a thing exists⁵³ by participation, it follows that it is caused by another.

This establishes that being is ontologically prior to relation. "Things are things before they are related things."⁵⁴

Anderson follows Penido in pointing out that to speak in terms of intrinsic attribution is to speak materially. This is quite proper in cases of 'mixed' analogy where there is a 'material coincidence.' The best example of this is the analogy between substance and accident, the primary analogy in Suarez's thinking. Being is intrinsic to both substance and accident, but substance and accident have being in different ways according to their different natures. The 'intrinsicism' of being,

. . . consists precisely and solely in the common though diverse (proportional) possession of a common "form," namely, the act of being. Accidents are said to exist in virtue of their relation to substances (attribution), but they do exist in virtue of their inherence in substances; and this existence is in every case proportional to the natures of those accidents and of those substances, so that a proportion of proportions, a "proportionality" in being is thereby established.

⁵³ Aquinas, Summa Theologica, op. cit., I.44.1.1. cited by Anderson, op. cit., p. 111.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 112.

⁵⁵ Anderson, op. cit., p. 112. (Italics in the original.)

There is a material coincidence of attribution and proportionality in the analogy between substance and accident and in some other analogies but this in no way establishes it as a general principle.

Another non-Thomistic feature of intrinsic attribution is that while Thomas does specifically mention proportionality, he nowhere commends intrinsicism. Again following Penido, Anderson concludes that the whole Suarezian thesis is fabricated from texts in St. Thomas which do not attempt to explain the nature of analogy in general but only to explain the application of the principle in 'mixed' cases. Nowhere else is there intrinsic attribution.⁵⁶

Not only is intrinsic attribution non-Thomistic, it runs the risk of "introducing a fundamental univocity into the very heart of analogy." Among the diverse modes of being, there would be only accidental differences. All analogates would be formally the same only relatively different. Analogy itself would be nothing more than a species of univocity. Being would become a genus and each being would be a species. Intrinsic attribution leads logically to the destruction of analogy. Anderson summarizes:

In the measure that attribution is stressed and proportionality denied, or given a secondary role, analogy will tend to resolve itself into univocity. And if proportionality in the proper sense is excluded and attribution set up as the sole constitutive character of true analogy, then in effect a basic formal univocity will have been substituted for analogy.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 115.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 116.

In brief, toleration of intrinsic attribution is to court metaphysical and theological disaster.

The above discussion is not exhaustive. The various parties are aware of their opponents arguments and have answers for them. It seems, however, beyond the scope of this paper to do more than we have done in outlining the basic points of difference. To go further would obligate us to resolve the disagreement. This is not the purpose of our having looked at Thomas' ideas about analogy and the interpretations of him by his followers.

Some conclusions about Thomistic analogy. St. Thomas never compiled a systematic treatise on his theory of analogy. When he does make reference to his analogical method, it is always in reference to some other problem or discussion. This in itself seems sufficient cause for the widely varying interpretations of Thomas put forward by his followers as the Thomistic understanding of analogy. Much of the disagreement seems to come from decisions made by each interpreter as to which specific text or texts should be regarded as the key texts for interpreting the whole of Thomist teaching. Both Cajetan and Suarez and many of their followers have done this, and, subsequently, have done us a disservice by forcing the variety of Thomistic expressions of analogy into their own synthetic categories. Thomas' understanding and use of analogy is far more fluid and flexible than his followers would want us to believe. No one category can adequately capture Thomas' intention. Each mode of analogy expresses a particular way of regarding the relationship in question, and each analogy must, therefore, be approached on its

own, considering what the intention of that particular analogy actually is. Most analogies appear to be 'mixed' and open to more than one interpretation. Discussion along this line seems far more profitable than debating which particular mode of analogy is the more correct or more fundamental one. The only alternative to this--and it may be a better alternative--is to suggest a new approach to the question of how we can be permitted to speak of God and man in the same language.⁵⁸

We shall soon be looking at one proposal for combining the analogies of extrinsic attribution and proportionality, but before doing this, it would be wise to look briefly at the Reformed use of analogy since it presents us with a radically different approach.

Analogy in Protestant Thought

For Protestants the doctrine of analogy is not nearly so crucial as it is for Catholics. As mentioned at the outset of our discussion, Protestant theologians differ from Catholic theologians by insisting that all analogies between God and the creature are established by extrinsic denomination, from God to the creature. This is the logical consequence of their implicit rejection of the analogia entis which is the basic analogy in Catholic theology. As far as protestants are concerned, there is an utter and complete alienation of sinful man from holy God, not a fundamental community as the analogia entis seeks to describe. The relationship between God and

⁵⁸ Ferre is one who is skeptical. "It is no longer possible, I believe, to hold that the logic of analogy, as it has normally been interpreted, is cogent." Language, Logic and God, op. cit., p. 105.

the creature is established in a supernatural, not a natural way.

Luther and Calvin both thought this to be true.

Luther's understanding of analogy. Given his aversion to rationalizing revelation (using reason to understand the Word of God), it is not surprising that Luther gives no systematic presentation of the presuppositions behind his use of theological language. It is possible, however, to draw a few conclusions from remarks made throughout the course of his writings which reveal his thinking.⁵⁹

Most important for our discussion is Luther's rejection of any analogy between man and God. Analogy is impossible because sin has utterly destroyed the imago dei, and there is nothing left in the creature similar to God. Because of the fall, "we cannot reach the comprehension of this image of God by our intellect, nor even in thought."⁶⁰ Because of our sinful state, no accurate knowledge of God is possible outside of revelation. God is known sola fide. The creature simply cannot understand the meaning of attributes predicated of God without the help of faith. If we could understand them, then predication would be univocal. For example, "were his justice such as could be adjudged as just by the human understanding, it were manifestly not divine and would differ nothing from human justice."⁶¹ It is,

⁵⁹I am indebted to Mondin, op. cit., pp. 103-107, for much of this analysis of Luther.

⁶⁰Luther, Lectures on Genesis, I-V, cited by Mondin, op. cit., p. 105.

⁶¹Luther, cited by R. Otto, The Idea of the Holy, p. 101, quoted by Mondin, op. cit., p. 105.

therefore, impossible for us to acquire any knowledge of what God is in himself but only what is true of his action toward us.

Because of Luther's attitude toward the analogia entis and the imago dei, there can never be any 'ontological similarity' between God and man. The analogy between Creator and creature is always, to use Scholastic terminology, an extrinsic one. This is so even after revelation because the change which redemption brings is an extrinsic and not an intrinsic one. The justification which faith brings does not fully transform man; it is only imputed to him. He is not just but only a justified sinner. The 'old man' continues to live conjointly with the 'new man.' Luther makes this point in his commentary on Romans:

The blessedness of grace is that the sin which remains in us is not imputed unto us, but we are accounted righteous before God How much soever, therefore, the remnants of sin within us may turn and rage at times, we are nevertheless, still accounted righteous before God; and sin is not imputed unto us, by reason of our faith, which keeps up a continual resistance against flesh.

On both the epistemological level and the ontological level, there is only an analogy of extrinsic attribution established by faith. This is a very limited analogy which cannot be expected to deliver much information about God, man, or the relationship between the two of them.

Calvin's understanding of analogy. Calvin is slightly more open to a natural knowledge of God than is Luther. According to him,

⁶²Luther, Preface to the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, quoted by Mondin, p. 106.

there should be a two-fold knowledge of God: "Since God is first manifested, both in the structure of the world and in the general tenor of Scripture, simply as the Creator, and afterwards reveals himself in the person of Christ as Redeemer, hence arises a twofold knowledge of him"⁶³ Both types of knowledge are based on revelation. There is natural knowledge that comes through God's revelation of himself in the created order and in man, and the supernatural knowledge that comes through God's revelation of himself in Christ. The first is knowledge of him as Creator, the second as Redeemer.

As concerns the first type of knowledge, we have a serious problem. This knowledge should be readily accessible to us, but it is not. The problem is in our reception, not in God's revelation. God does truly reveal himself in nature. "God . . . hath manifested himself in the formation of every part of the world, and daily presents himself to public view, in such a manner, that they cannot open their eyes without being constrained to behold him."⁶⁴ The problem is well summarized by three of Calvin's chapter headings. "The Knowledge of God (is) Conspicuous in the Formation and Continual Government of the World." "The Human Mind (is) Naturally Endued with the Knowledge of God." "This Knowledge (is) Extinguished or Corrupted, Partly by Ignorance, Partly by Wickedness."⁶⁵ Because of the fall, man is so far out of harmony with God and God's creation, he can no longer perceive the revelation which God makes in the natural order.

⁶³ John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, I.2.1.

⁶⁴ Ibid., I.5.1.

⁶⁵ Ibid., I.5.3. and 4.

In the beginning, when man bore the imago dei, he would have been capable of acquiring some knowledge of God through the contemplation of nature and himself, but this would not have been knowledge of God's essence but of his virtues. God's nature is incomprehensible. He gives us "a description not of what he is in himself, but of what he is to us, that our knowledge of him may consist rather in a lively perception, than in vain and airy speculation."⁶⁶ The natural knowledge man has of God does not come through reason but through the opera dei by which Calvin means God's creative and providential activity. God is, therefore, known only as he is in his actions toward us. We can say that God is good, wise, or just because we know his works to be good, wise, and just, not because we know him as he is in himself to be this way.

For Calvin, knowing God's virtues is quite enough. It is unimportant for us to know what he is himself. What is important is our knowing what he wills to be for us. Even after the revelation of Jesus Christ, God's most important work, we do not know the essence of God but only how God acts. Through the revelation of Christ, we are given supernatural illumination, not into the mysteries of God's nature, but only into the mystery of his will for man.⁶⁷

⁶⁶Ibid., I.10.2.

⁶⁷Ibid., III.2.6.

From the preceding discussion, we are justified in saying that in Calvin, as in Luther, the analogy between Creator and creature is always an extrinsic one. The attributes predicated of God do not describe his essence but only his relationship to the created order.

Luther and Calvin agree on most crucial points. Although both can speak of a natural knowledge of God, the fall has made this impossible as far as man is concerned. We must rely totally on revelation for our knowledge. Because no trace of an analogia entis remains after the fall, there is no possibility of any analogy of intrinsic attribution. Such is not even possible even after the event of Jesus Christ, for man's sinful nature is not replaced with a righteous one, but rather righteousness and the other attributes given by faith are simply imputed to him. Both Calvin and Luther consider God's essence wholly unknowable. God is truly Deus absconditus.

Karl Barth and the 'analogia fidei.' Karl Barth is certainly the most influential protestant thinker of our time. For this reason, as well as by reason of its own merit, some mention must be made of Barth's doctrine of analogy.

Basic to all Barth's thinking is a thoroughgoing rejection of philosophical solutions to theological problems. Even though he recognizes the existence of natural theology, he believes it to be necessarily false and any philosophical systematizing of religious concepts to be false as well.⁶⁸ Theology is not responsible to

⁶⁸ Karl Barth, The Knowledge of God and the Service of God, pp. 4-5, cited by Mondin, op. cit., p. 149.

philosophy for any of its statements but only to revelation. The Word of God is not subject to human presupposition. Human presuppositions are subject to the Word. This does not mean that there is no place for philosophy. Philosophy is inevitable. "We all wear some kind of glasses. If we did not, we would not be able to see."⁶⁹ Evenso, philosophy can be no more than the handmaiden of theology. This is especially true as concerns our knowledge of God. Divine grace, not human thought, gives us our knowledge.

To the question how we come to know God by means of our thinking and language, we must give the answer that of ourselves we do not come to know him, that, on the contrary, this happens only as the grace of the revelation of God comes to us and therefore to the means of our thinking and language, adopting us and them We are permitted to make use, and a successful use at that, of the means given to us. We do not create this success. Nor do our means create it. But the grace of God's revelation creates it. To know this is the awe in which our knowledge of God becomes true.⁷⁰

Barth feel that in theological discourse neither univocity nor equivocity is possible but that analogy is unavoidable. There does not exist a simple parity of content and meaning when we use the same word to discuss the creature and to discuss God. "A parity of this type would mean either that God had ceased to be God and become merely a creature, or that man with his capacity had become a God."⁷¹ There can be no question of likeness when a word describes creaturely being and when it describes divine being.

⁶⁹ Barth, Prolegomena, p. 404., cited by Mondin, op. cit., p. 150.

⁷⁰ Barth, Church Dogmatics, II/1, op. cit., p. 223.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 224.

Barth is as emphatic in his denial of equivocity as of univocity. If we exaggerate the disparity between God and the creature, "we do not praise God but deny him" If creaturely words mean something utterly different when applied to God, we must be admitting that we do not know God. He says:

The fact that we know him must mean that, with our views, concepts and words, we do not describe and express something quite different from himself, but that in and by these means of ours . . . we describe and express God himself.⁷²

If this were the case there would be no possibility at all of any relationship between knower and known, between creature and creator. God's revelation of himself would be totally negative, a "veiling." Barth, therefore, concludes:

The impossibility of the thesis of a parity between our word and the being of God must not press us into the counter-thesis of a disparity between them. On the basis of the same presupposition, the latter is just as impossible as the former.⁷³

Facing these impossibilities, the 'older theologies,' Barth tells us, used the concept of analogy to express the relationship between God and in this way destroyed the equally false theses of parity and disparity while salvaging the truth contained in both of them. "There can be no question of either parity or disparity, there remains only what is generally meant by analogy: similarity, partial correspondence and agreement."⁷⁴

⁷²Ibid., p. 225.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

So far, Barth is in total agreement with Thomist thought as regards the necessity of analogy to avoid either univocal or equivocal predication when speaking of God and the creature and the relationship or 'fellowship' which exists between them. Where he differs from Thomas is in his insistence that this fellowship is established by and can only be known through revelation. It is not on the basis of creation but on the basis of grace that the analogy is established. The Barthian analogy which defines the relationship between Creator and creature is not, as in Thomist thought, the analogia entis but rather the analogia fidei.⁷⁵

The analogia fidei describes a fellowship, a community, that is established sola gratia between God and man. What sort of analogy, in traditional terms, is the analogia fidei? First, it is not an analogy of inequality because the mode of predication cannot express God's utter transcendence and is constantly exposed to pantheism. Further, Barth rejects proportionality which he believes signifies a quantitative correspondence between two beings. The correspondence or agreement partially exist and partially do not exist. Barth objects to the mathematical nature of this type of analogy. Attribution is the only acceptable mode of analogy, and this means extrinsic and not intrinsic attribution. He makes this point in reference to Quenstedt who insists that attribute belongs

⁷⁵ McIntyre's suggestion that the term analogia gratiae is preferable to analogia fidei is cogent. "It is because grace sets up the analogy that faith takes place." "Analogy," op. cit., p. 15.

properly, that is inwardly, to both the analogans and the analogatum. In saying this Quenstedt has forgotten the doctrine of justification by faith and its applicability to the way in which we know God. If this is applied,

. . . what converts the creature into an analogue of God does not lie in itself and its nature, not even in the sense that God will acknowledge and accept as an analogue (in itself) something of that which lies in the nature of the creature. What converts the creature into an analogue of God lies only in the veracity of the object known analogously in the knowledge of God, and therefore in the veracity of God himself. It therefore possesses it extrinsece in the form of apprehensio and not at all intrinsece.⁷⁶

According to Barth, in suggesting intrinsic attribution, Quenstedt is resisting the idea that the similarity between God and the creature is 'controlled and bestowed' by God himself. Rather Quenstedt wants the similarity to be understood as being part of the co-existence of the Creator and the creature. Quenstedt makes being and not grace the criterion of truth. For this reason he has not, in spite of claiming so, rejected the analogy of inequality, for intrinsic attribution means being is identical in God and in us.⁷⁷ It is not participation in a common being that establishes the fellowship between man and God but God's grace shown in man's redemption.

Man can speak of God in human language because God, through his grace, has given him this power. This is not quite as straight

⁷⁶ Barth, Church Dogmatics, II/1, op. cit., p. 239.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 240.

forward as it sounds, for Barth gives four reasons why human language can be used to describe God: (a) Because our words are a creation of God, they are most properly his and not ours. Words which can discuss both God and the creature are most appropriately used in reference to God. For example, God is the Father and the Son. These words describe him properly. When used of us, our fatherhood or sonship are but imitations of his. (b) We can use human language to speak of God because God has first used this language to speak of himself in his revelation of himself to us. (c) We can speak of God in our language because the meaning of this language is fully realized only in God. For instance, the question is not whether or not God is a person but whether or not we are persons, i.e. genuinely free subjects. (d) Through Christ and the Church God has sanctified our language.⁷⁸

Even though human language can appropriately be used to speak of God, it can only express the truth of God in a veiled or hidden way. The reason for this is obvious. God created language first and most appropriately for himself and only secondarily for man. Only God can, therefore, fully understand his own language. Man is man and not God and can, therefore, never fully understand God's words when they are revealed to him. Our language when used by God or for God is always veiled or hidden from our understanding. God's revelation is truly both a veiling and an unveiling.

⁷⁸Barth, Church Dogmatics, I/1, op. cit., pp. 153ff. See also II/1 pp. 228-229. These four points are outlined by Mondin, op. cit., pp. 156-157.

Barth puts this point in another more comprehensible way when he says that the mystery and ambiguity of theological language arises from a contradiction between form and content. The content of revelation is divine; the form is human. The form of theological language is always that of human language, but the content is always that of God himself. Because man is man, he cannot separate form from content, isolate the divine content from its human form. All we can ever know is the worldly form of the divine word.⁷⁹

The category of form-content is central to Barth's system, appearing as the explanation for many situations. "The category of form-content in Barth's system has the function of expressing the mystery of divine sovereignty and gracefulness, of divine transcendence and immanence in the event of revelation."⁸⁰ As concerns theological language, we have seen how in revelation divine content takes human form and that this human form is not adequate to express the divine content. Therefore, the divine content, even though it is revealed, is also hidden.

So far we have been discussing mainly the epistemology of the analogia fidei which Barth discusses in some considerable detail. Nowhere that we know of does he give the same systematic attention to the ontology of this analogy. It is possible, however, to get a highly accurate picture of his view by looking at his approach to the imago dei.

⁷⁹ Barth, Church Dogmatics, I/1, op. cit., p. 201.

⁸⁰ Mondin, op. cit., p. 150.

Barth denies views such as those held by Augustine and Thomas, that man is in the image of God because of some quality of body or mind that he possesses. The image of God is not found in man's physical or psychological make-up. It is not a likeness found in the dominium terrae, man's capacity to rule or control even though this is the result of it. The imago dei consists in man being an "I" and a "Thou." This alone distinguishes man from the rest of creation.

What is created without and alongside man, exists in juxtaposition and even in a certain full-scale co-existence, but not in the true confrontation and reciprocity which are actualized in the reality of an "I" and a "Thou." Neither heaven nor earth, water nor land, nor living creatures from plants upward to land animals, are a "Thou" whom God can confront as an "I" nor do they stand in an "I-Thou" relationship to one another, nor can they enter into such a relationship.⁸¹

The reason God has created this relationship is that he wished to have a creature who, even though a creature, could be a real partner, a creature capable of acting responsibly in relation to him and a creature in which his own divine form is not alien. Man is created as a creature which can bear the divine form of life. This point is most important for understanding the ontology of Barth's analogia fidei. Barth believes that God himself exists as a divine "I-Thou" as is witnessed by his saying, "Let us create man in our own image," rather than saying as in the other instances of creation, "Let there be," or "Let the earth bring forth." Barth says,

⁸¹ Barth, Church Dogmatics, III/1, op. cit., p. 184.

When man was to be the subject, it had to be said that the creative basis of his existence was and is a history which took place in the divine sphere and essence; a divine movement to and from a divine correspondence to it. A genuine counterpart in God himself leading to a unanimous decision, is the secret prototype which is the basis of an obvious copy, a secret image and an obvious reflection in the co-existence of God and man, and also of the existence of man himself.⁸²

Being in the likeness of God, therefore, means that man is created with a nature that has a pattern in the divine nature. The human 'I-Thou' is a 'copy' and 'imitation,' a 'creaturely repetition' of the divine 'I-Thou.'

The divine 'I-Thou' means that within God's being there is a counterpart, "a genuine but harmonious self-encounter and self-discovery; a free co-existence and co-operation; an open confrontation and reciprocity."⁸³ Man repeats this divine 'I-Thou.' First of all, God has made man his counterpart because God's 'encounter and discovery' of himself is limited in God's relationship to man. Secondly, the relationship that God has to himself and God has with man is repeated in man's relationship to man. The evidence for this last point is that God created man male and female. This is the only interpretation the creation stories give of God's creating man. It is the only thing we are told other than that man was created by the word of God.⁸⁴

⁸²Ibid., p. 185.

⁸³Ibid., p. 184.

⁸⁴Ibid.

The existence of 'I-Thou' first occurs in God. When he creates, he says, "Let us." God is not as some assume, conferring with others outside himself. This is an internal differentiation and relationship which is found within the three persons of the Trinity.⁸⁵ The divine 'I-Thou' is contained within the one entity, God. The human 'I-Thou,' as epitomized in man's being male and female, takes place between two separate individuals. For this reason, there is a correspondence between unlike entities when God and man are compared and not a correspondence between similar individuals. This is the ontological separation expressed in Bartian analogy. There can be no question that God and man are in anyway alike other than the fact that the relationship within God of the divine 'I-Thou' is repeated in the relationship among men.⁸⁶

Barth here calls his analogy an analogia relationis. There can be no question of an analogia entis. Barth states his argument this way:

⁸⁵ Barth says the decision of the early exegesis was that in the statement, "Let us," there is a reference to divine triunity. Barth says that the "Let us" obviously expresses genuine plurality in God, and while it does not specifically say what this plurality is, it can only be properly understood against the background of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Ibid., p. 192.

⁸⁶ Barth's teaching on the imago dei has passed through several stages of development before reaching this form. For example, in earlier writings (See Credo, p. 33) quite in tune with traditional teaching, the imago dei signified man's appointment to reflect the divine glory in his own existence, but any ability to do this was lost totally in the fall and can only be restored by man's new creation in Christ. The imago dei, viewed from the early perspective, is something within the individual. From the final perspective outlined above, the imago dei is something which exists between men as they are created for 'I-Thou' relationship to each other, just as the divine 'I-Thou' exists between father-son in the Trinity. (See Herbert Hartwell, The Theology of Karl Barth: An Introduction, p. 130, for a list of references indicating Barth's development.)

It is not palpable that we have to do with a clear and simple correspondence . . . between this mark of the divine being, namely that it includes an 'I' and 'Thou,' and the being of man, male and female. The relationship between the summoning 'I' in God's being and the summoned divine 'Thou' is reflected both in the relationship of God to the man whom he has created, and also in the relationship between the 'I' and the 'Thou,' in the divine being . . . are not identical with the differentiation and relationship between male and female Analogy, even as the analogy of relation, does not entail likeness but the correspondence of the unlike.⁸⁷

To insure that we understand what being in the image of God means, Barth ventures to translate Genesis 1:26-27 as, "Let us make man in our original, according to our prototype." This rendering would make it clear that man was not created to be the image of God but was created in correspondence with the divine image. The point of the text is clear. God created man as a being which corresponds to his own being in such a way that God himself is the original and man the copy or imitation, not a duplicate.⁸⁸

Barth, of course, says a lot more about the analogia fidei than we have, but this is as far as we need to go in understanding its epistemology and ontology. As far as Thomist categories are concerned, Barth obviously intends the analogia fidei to be traditional reformed analogy of extrinsic attribution. Man's divine likeness is never his possession but consists entirely in the intention and deed of his creator. Barth makes it quite clear that

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 196. That this discussion sounds very much like a discussion of the analogy of proportionality, will be commented on later.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 197.

man's creation does not automatically constitute his being in the image of God. The imago dei is a gift beyond the gift of his existence. Unlike Thomism where by the act of creation man is constituted in God's image and possesses it as a natural part of his existence, in Barthianism the imago dei is not a natural part of man. Even though he could not be man without it, he could nevertheless be a creature without it. Man in Thomism is, therefore, always within a basic established relationship to God and, thereby, in community with him. In Barthianism there is an utter and complete alienation of sinful man from holy God and no fundamental community between them except by an act of divine grace. In Thomism this special act is not needed. The act of existence establishes the analogy between man and God. In Barthianism this is established only by grace through Jesus Christ.

We should expect that thinking as creative and as complicated as Barth's should also be controversial. Indeed, many criticisms have been made of Barth's position of which we shall repeat just a few as put forward by McIntyre.⁸⁹

Critique of the 'analogia fidei.' Barth's identification of his analogy of faith with the analogy of extrinsic attribution, does not accurately describe its function in his theology. For one thing, according to the rules of extrinsic attribution, common terms have a different meaning in relation to the different analogates. Healthy does not mean the same thing when applied to complexion and to medicine.

⁸⁹ McIntyre, "Analogy," op. cit., pp. 14-16. Unless indicated otherwise, all the following discussion is taken from this source.

In Barth's thinking, however, all analogates stand in an identical relationship to God--as sinners who are related to God only through the grace of his salvation in Jesus Christ. Secondly, if the application of all predicates shared by God and man can never be predicated of man intrinsically but must always be predicated extrinsically even after the operation of grace, it is difficult to see how this grace actually operates. For example, while righteousness is ours only in Christ, if it always is external to us and never internal, has not the purpose of salvation been frustrated?

Barth rejects proportionality on the most superficial grounds. He objects to its supposed mathematical nature on the ground that there is no way of calculating the correspondence between divine and creaturely attributes. Barth has here missed the point explicitly made by those who favour this analogy, that it is not an analogy of mathematical proportions in which terms across the sign are related to each other.

Even though he rejects proportionality, Barth uses it passim. The analogia fidei is an analogy of relations and not of attributes and is, therefore, best conceptualized in terms of proportionality and not attribution. That the analogia fidei is an analogy of relationships is made sufficiently clear by the examples Barth employs, the relationship of Christ's humanity to his divinity, the relationship of Christ to the church. The analogia fidei is based on the similarity between two relationships: the relationship of divine 'I'

to the divine 'Thou' as expressed within the Trinity and the relationship between the 'I' and the human 'Thou' as expressed in man's being made male and female. "The relationship between the summoning 'I' in God's being and the summoned Divine 'Thou' is reflected both in the relationship between the 'I' and the 'Thou,' between male and female in the human existence itself."⁸⁹

We must interject here that even though the analogia fidei is an analogy of proportionality and not of attribution, it must not be equated with the analogia entis of Thomist thought. Barth consistently rejects all views of the divine-human relationship which conceive it as an analogy of being.⁹⁰ Mondin indicates the basic differences between the Thomist and the Barthian views:

Actually the epistemology and ontology of Barth's similarity of relations differ toto caelo from the ontology and epistemology of the analogy of proportionality of Thomistic natural theology. The ontology and epistemology of Barth's analogy of relations are either based on, or related to, revelation and grace. The ontology and epistemology of the analogy of proportionality of Thomistic natural theology are based on nature as such, apart from revelation and grace. The analogy of relations is then, an analogy of faith, not an analogy of being⁹¹

McIntyre is not happy with Barth's dismissal of the analogia entis, especially as it occurs within the discussion of Quenstedt's interpretation which is not the view generally held by those who support the doctrine, the view of intrinsic attribution. Because

⁸⁹ Barth, Church Dogmatics, III/1, op. cit., p. 196. See note 86 for text in full.

⁹⁰ Barth, Church Dogmatics, I/1, op. cit., pp. 274, 279; II/2, op. cit., p. 501; II/1, op. cit., p. 81.

⁹¹ Mondin, op. cit., p. 168.

he accepts Quenstedt's position, Barth rejects the analogia entis saying it eliminates the infinite qualitative difference between God and man by reducing it to a quantitative difference, just a difference in degree. Man and God are, therefore, brought under the same category, being, of which God and man are just species and can be understood together. This is, as we have already seen, definitely not the Thomist view and is debatably not Quenstedt's view. In rejecting the analogia entis on the grounds that it conceives being as a genus, Barth is not opposing Thomas as he thinks he is but is in fact agreeing with Thomas in the rejection of the analogia duorum ad tertium. Had Barth given attention to the Cajetanist interpretation of the analogia entis where this analogy is seen as an analogy of proportionality, he might have considered it more kindly. As it is, however, he considers a view which could well have been influenced by Suarez's thinking, and, as we have seen, the Cajetanists accuse Suarez of exactly the same thing of which Barth accuses Thomas.

Barth is actually not as opposed in practice to Thomist uses of analogy as he is in principle. His teaching does not differ as totally from Aquinas' as would appear if one took his statements at face value. The differences are great, however, and should not be minimized. To say as Mondin does, that "instead of maintaining two conflicting doctrines, Aquinas and Barth simply emphasize different aspects of the same reality,"⁹² is to trivialize the essential

⁹²Mondin, op. cit., p. 172. This conclusion seems totally inconsistent with the analysis which precedes it where Mondin explains the incompatibility of Barthian and Thomistic epistemology and ontology.

features of each man's approach to the problem. Aquinas insists on the basic goodness of human nature and on the power of human reason to shed light on the mysteries of revelation. Barth insists on the basic sinfulness of man and the deficiency of human knowledge in acquiring any insight into God. The analogia entis and the analogia fidei are not the same reality either epistemologically or ontologically. The former is a natural relationship between man and God; the latter is a supernatural one. Even if both are regarded as analogies or proportionality, they are not, as we have seen, the same analogy.

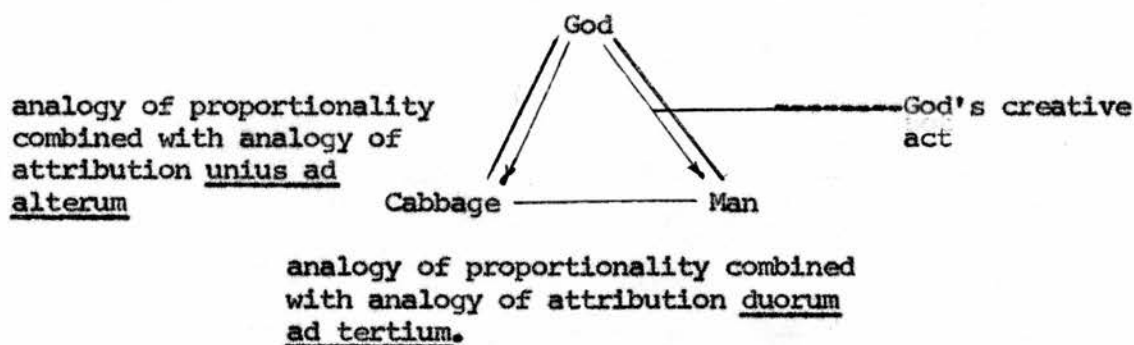
Conclusions about Analogy in Traditional Theology

Neither Aquinas nor Barth ^{is} are strangers to the truth of the analogy between man and God. What should be apparent from the above discussion is that each tradition expresses some truth but no tradition contains it all. Even from within Protestant and Catholic tradition, several contemporary writers are acknowledging the inadequacy of the traditional and modern forms of analogy. Some who accept the basic correctness of Cajetan's classification of analogy feel that they cannot rely totally, as he does, on the analogy of proportionality to express the meaning of a perfection predicated of both God and man. Barth, in spite of his sworn allegiance to the analogy of external attribution, is in fact not only committed to a drastic modification of it but also to another type of analogy, proportionality, which he claims to reject. Anderson, a contemporary Thomist in the Cajetanist tradition finds that he must rely on the doctrine of creation to

support his interpretation of the analogia entis as an analogy of proportionality. McIntyre is quite right when he concludes his discussion of Roman, Reformed and Neo-orthodox analogies with this statement.

"The first fact that strikes us is that none of the standard interpretations of analogy by itself seems able to meet the complexity of our present-day understanding of our relation to God and even our knowledge of God." He then concludes, "If we wish to keep the old-established ways, then it seems some combination of analogy of proportionality with analogy of attribution is required."⁹³

Mascall, independently, reaches the same conclusion. Neither proportionality nor attribution by themselves can say what the relationships on the two sides of the equation stand for. A combination of proportionality and attribution can do together what neither can do alone. He proposes just such a combination. Using his illustration of life being predicated of cabbages, men and God, he gives us the following diagram:



Causality establishes the relationship between God and creature. The first cause, God, and his creature, cabbages, men, etc., are

⁹³ McIntyre, "Analogy," op. cit., p. 19.

directly related by the relation of creation which "cuts horizontally across the analogy of proportionality with an analogy of attribution." The two sides of the formula are not equal but neither are they completely dissimilar. When the analogates are God and his creatures, the analogy is attribution unius ad alterum. When the analogates are both creatures, the analogy is the analogy of attribution duorum ad tertium with each of the analogates being involved in the analogy of attribution unius ad alterum with God. The tight interlocking of attribution and proportionality provides a satisfactory way of describing the relationship between God and world. Proportionality insures that God possesses the attribute formally, not just virtually; attribution avoids the agnosticism possible in proportionality.⁹⁴

Mascall is not the only one rethinking the question of analogy. Mondin and Klubertanz both propose thorough re-classification of analogy, but neither has much sympathy for the other's proposal.⁹⁵ The situation is so unsettled that continued discussion is inevitable. The very nature of the subject, human discussion of divine matters, implies the difficulty of claiming finality for any one position.

ANALOGY IN PROCESS THOUGHT

Since process theology stands in the tradition of natural theology,⁹⁶ we should expect considerable comment pertaining to the subject

⁹⁴ Mascall, Existence and Analogy, op. cit., p. 113.

⁹⁵ See the concluding chapters of these author's books (op. cit.) for their proposals.

⁹⁶ Note the titles of two major works in this field, Hartshorne's A Natural Theology for Our Time, and Cobb's A Christian Natural Theology.

of analogy. Hartshorne reflects this concern with language when he says:

Let us suppose . . . that there are necessary metaphysical truths in language, with its basis in everyday communication, equipped to express such truths? If there were no difficulty in expressing metaphysical necessities, would not more agreement have long ago been reached? If there is no possibility of expressing them, would the attempt have been persisted in so long by so many superior intellects?⁹⁷

He laments that regrettably the commonest notion today seems to be that metaphysical assertions are "confused or inconsistent applications of words which in more normal applications, made good sense."⁹⁸ Furthermore, there is the widespread belief that there is no genuine logic of metaphysical concepts nor rules for talking metaphysically. Process thinkers do, however, have rules and try both to state and obey them.⁹⁹

Whitehead and Analogical Predication

Nowhere does Whitehead present an explicit statement about analogy and whether or not he is speaking analogically when he uses terms like 'creator' and 'creature' with reference both to God and to other entities. It appears that analogy is a subject which never commanded his attention. This is not surprising when we realize that his concerns were not primarily theological. Whitehead does mention the symbolic nature of all language,¹⁰⁰ but this is not applied to speaking of God and others using common predicates. Be

⁹⁷ Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 139.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 158.

¹⁰⁰ Alfred North Whitehead, Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect, (New York: Capricorn Books, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1949), pp. 10-13.

this as it may, he is speaking analogically. It is possible to see what position is implicit in Whitehead's thinking at least in regard to the notions of creation and creativity.

As you may recall, Whitehead says that creativity is the "universal of universals." It has ultimatic status in reality and God and all other entities are in its grasp.¹⁰¹ This subordination of God to creativity becomes quite apparent when Whitehead clarifies the function of the initial aim which God provides each creature. Since this is the beginning of the creative process for each entity, he says God could be thought of as "the creator of each temporal actual entity," but he hastens to add:

. . . this phrase is apt to be misleading by its suggestion that the ultimate creativity of the universe is to be ascribed to God's volition. The true metaphysical position is that God is the aboriginal instance of this creativity, and is, therefore, the aboriginal condition which qualifies its action. It is the function of actuality to characterize creativity, and God is the eternal primordial character There is no meaning to 'God' apart from the creativity.¹⁰²

God's creating and the creating of others exemplifies the ultimate creativity which prevades the universe. Both are instances of it, but neither is seen as possessing the characteristic in a definitive way. Even though creativity per se is "pure activity" and does not fit into any of Whitehead's categories of existence as well as being dependent on specific instances in the actual world

¹⁰¹ See above, p. 183ff.

¹⁰² Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit., p. 344. Also see page 374 for a similar statement.

for its actuality, it still transcends any of these instances. Any comparison, then, between divine and non-divine creativity is analogy duorum ad tertium. This is the type of analogy that exists between two entities because of the relationship each bears to a third entity. In Whitehead's thinking, both God and others are said to be creators because of their exemplification of transcendent creativity.

With reference to characteristics predicated of both God and others, analogy duorum ad tertium has not been accepted by any of the theologians cited earlier, either from the Roman or the Reformed traditions.¹⁰³ This sort of analogical predication is unanimously viewed as being inapplicable when one of the analogates is God. From a theological perspective, the Whiteheading understanding of creativity does not give us an adequate or acceptable analogy for discussing the creativity of God and other entities. Because Creativity rather than God, is seen as being the ultimate principle of existence, Mascall echos Susan Stebbing's comment that "Professor Whitehead's indefensible use of language becomes nothing short of scandalous when he speaks of 'God.'"¹⁰⁴

Elsewhere Mascall points out that the uniqueness of God's creative act is destroyed and an improper analogy is established between God and the world. Creativity is not primarily and perfectly God's activity in the world, but a substitute for it. Whiteheadian creativity is an inherent general principle in all reality of which

¹⁰³ See above, pp. 308-09.

¹⁰⁴ Mascall, The Openness of Being, op. cit., p. 161.

God is but one instance, even though the supreme instance. The absolute superiority of God in relationship to the cosmos, is denied. God is the "chief exemplification" of creativity, the creator par excellence, but creativity is not his creativity. Being the "chief exemplification" of creativity is not adequate to insure God the place he holds in traditional theology. Creativity is the ultimate factor in the creative process; God and other entities simply condition it. God is not regarded as possessing creativity fully and completely. He is not the source of creativity nor is creativity as it exists in others, to be regarded as his gift to them, his creation. Creatures do not participate in an attribute which properly belongs to God, but both the creature and God participate in a perfection that transcends them both. This, as we have seen, can lead to univocal predication. Such is a real danger in Whitehead's thought.¹⁰⁵

As we have seen, it is not only Whitehead's critics but also his disciples who cannot accept his subordination of God to creativity. We noted previously Hartshorne's and Cobb's departure from Whitehead by their inversion of Whitehead's priorities and their insistence that God cannot be conceived as a product of an instance of creativity, only as 'Creativity itself.'¹⁰⁶ In so doing, they insist that in process thought creativity is an analogical concept occupying the same place in their thinking as being does in Aquinas. Because of

¹⁰⁵ Mascall, Christian Theology and Natural Science, op. cit., p. 158.

¹⁰⁶ See above, pp. 191ff.

this, we find Hartshorne dealing extensively with language and analogical predication.¹⁰⁷

Hartshorne's Understanding of Analogy

Hartshorne basically agrees with Wittgenstein that theology is grammar. He would go further, though, and apply this notion to metaphysics as well. Theology and metaphysics are grammatical subjects because they answer questions like, "How do we talk sense rather than nonsense?" or, "How can we be clear and consistent rather than confused and inconsistent?"¹⁰⁸ A major problem with these two disciplines is that both have been guilty of using bad grammar. Positivism, therefore, is partially justified in holding that the idea of God is a mere confusion or absurdity.¹⁰⁹ Positivism should not claim, as it does, that any idea of God must be nonsense. That previous attempts at speaking clearly about him have proved deficient, does not condemn any future

¹⁰⁷ Like Aquinas and others, Hartshorne's thinking is not totally consistent from his earliest to his latest writing, but it does display remarkable agreement. Our basic analysis, however, will be taken from his later writings, particularly Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, where he provides his most complete discussions of these topics.

¹⁰⁸ Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 131.

¹⁰⁹ Hartshorne often makes this comment with specific reference to Aquinas' analogy between divine and human knowledge which, he feels, illustrates this confusion. Even though Thomas thinks he has established analogical similarity, it is in fact, an analogy which inverts the two terms. Human knowledge is conformed to its object; divine knowledge conforms the objects it knows to itself. Knowledge is an extrinsic relationship for God, an intrinsic relationship for other knowers. It, therefore, has no clear meaning since it means directly opposite things. See, Philosophers Speak of God, op. cit., pp. 119ff; The Divine Relativity, op. cit., pp. 7, 119; and Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 240.

attempt, particularly if such an attempt is based on a radical departure from the traditional expressions. Because process thought embodies such a departure in its dipolar concept of deity, it claims to be capable of speaking clearly and consistently about God, the world, and the relationship existing between them.¹¹⁰ Our purpose now is to see how Hartshorne justifies this claim by analyzing the way in which he talks of God, especially the way he speaks about God analogically.

Hartshorne's classification of theological language. Hartshorne believes that theology uses three types of terms when speaking about God. It is crucial, he believes, to distinguish between them. They are: (a) plainly symbolic terms; (b) plainly literal terms; and (c) problematic terms (i.e. those "which may be literal if and in so far as we have religious intuition.")¹¹¹ Each of these classifications needs some definition and description.

Even though he rejects the idea that all talk of God is symbolic, Hartshorne insists that we can and do make some legitimately

¹¹⁰ Hartshorne says that the process understanding of God was never conceived or much less denied by Kant's and Hume's refutations of "all" natural theology. A Natural Theology for Our Time, op. cit., p. 22. See also, Man's Vision of God, Chapter 1.

¹¹¹ Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 155. In The Divine Relativity, written before Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, Hartshorne mentions only two types of terms--metaphorical and literal, the latter including those he later designates as problematic. He confesses dissatisfaction with this classification and that he may be using these terms in a non-metaphorical and non-literal sense. He asks to be shown how to put his case more precisely. This, I think, he has done for himself in the three-fold classification cited above. As it seems to be the classification which most satisfactorily expresses his thought, it is the one used in this paper. See The Divine Relativity, op. cit., pp. 37ff.

symbolic statements about God.¹¹² These statements include our referring to him as a shepherd, a ruler, a potter, a high tower, a rock, a king, etc. What makes these statements symbolic is that the terms used refer to quite specific things found within the natural world. It is, for example, clear what shepherds are--especially within a biblical frame of reference, there are almost unlimited alternatives to them. Not-a-shepherd is a distinction from everything but a shepherd and covers a vast number of possibilities. Were we to contend that God was literally a shepherd, we would be severely restricting his freedom to be other than a shepherd. God cannot, therefore, be identified with any specific entity. Shepherd, when applied to God, symbolizes something about God, or more precisely, about God's relationship to persons. Though not literally a shepherd, there is something in God's nature which can be expressed by the use of this term. Symbolic terms (also called metaphors) point to God but do not describe him. To talk of God in symbolic terms "somehow makes us aware of him, rather as poetry and art make us aware of things."¹¹³ In religious practice, metaphors are necessary "in order to move the imaginations and hearts of men," but in theology, where this is not relevant, there is no need for metaphor.¹¹⁴ Symbolic language, therefore, has a religious and not a theological function.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 115.

¹¹⁴ Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

¹¹⁵ Hartshorne suggests that Barth's dialectical language is symbolic and should not be regarded as making any logical or theologically meaningful statements about God. See Man's Vision of God, op. cit. p. 12.

While some terms merely symbolize God and his relationship to man, others describe him quite literally. These are abstract terms like infinite and finite, absolute and relative. Unlike symbolic terms, there is not an infinity of alternatives to them. For instance, "if God is not literally finite and relative, then he is literally and exclusively infinite and absolute, for here there is no third possibility."¹¹⁶ There is no symbolic reference at all in abstract statements. The contrast between symbolic and literal speaking is illustrated in this way:

That which is 'not literally a shepherd' may yet have all sorts of resemblances to, as well as differences from a shepherd. But that which is not literally 'in some degree and quality made what it is by contingent relations,' i.e. relative, can only be something which is by no degree so constituted, i.e. it must be quite literally and entirely absolute.¹¹⁷

Literal terms differ totally from symbolic ones. The latter, as we have said, are very specific referring to a particular reality. The former are abstract and applicable to a large section of reality. There is only one directly opposed, contrasting term. While God could be a myriad of things other than a shepherd, he could only be one thing, absolute, if he were not relative. Even if we regard God as super-relative, as Hartshorne does, this does not modify this idea. Super-relativity is just the eminent form of an entirely literal relativity. There is nothing symbolic about it. Super-relativity is simply the specific form of God's relativity.

¹¹⁶ Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Statements about God which employ terms that properly describe other specific, concrete states of reality, are to be regarded as symbolic. Statements which employ abstract and universal terms are to be regarded as literal. There are, however, some statements which fit neither category, being neither unambiguously literal nor unambiguously metaphorical. These are problematical terms. Because they imply a relationship to the mind, Hartshorne also calls them 'psychical' terms and includes among them knowledge, love and will.

What makes these terms problematic is that we generally think of them as denoting human states or functions. Therefore, we might think of them as being symbolic. They are not, however, nearly as narrowly specific as symbolic terms. For example, 'to know' has a much wider field of reference than 'to be a shepherd.' The question is just how wide a field of reference do psychical terms have--how far do they go beyond a specifically human application. Hartshorne admits that this is not an easy question to answer, but he believes "that there is a legitimate, broadest possible meaning for psychical terms which is applicable to all individuals whatever, from atoms to deity."¹¹⁸

When expanded this far, instead of sounding like specific, symbolic terms, they begin to sound like universal, literal terms. There is, however, a crucial difference here. They are not abstractions since they exist only in their specific, individual realizations. Abstractions cannot think, feel, or remember.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 154.

Only concrete realities can do these things. Because they are abstractions, literal statements do not vary in meaning as they are applied to one level of reality or another. Because they are real only in concrete instances, the meaning of psychical statements does vary. For example, to be relative is simply and literally that--no more, no less, no other. But as regards to know, to feel, to remember, there are qualitative differences which are not easily covered by "empty terms" like 'way' or 'degree.'¹¹⁹

Hartshorne illustrates this point by discussing the term "knowledge." Knowledge must not be regarded as an abstraction, for God does not know the same way as man knows, any more than a man knows in the same way a dog or an atom may be said to know. The knower determines the nature of his knowledge. Abstract terms like, for example, 'relative' are insensitive to the differences between the various levels of reality. Psychical terms like, 'knowledge' are not. On the other hand, God's knowledge is not just metaphorical for it is genuine knowledge, to be exact, the most genuine knowledge there is. "To know" should mean "having conclusive evidence so that there is no possibility of error." Only God's knowledge perfectly exemplifies this definition. All creaturely knowledge is vastly inferior knowledge.¹²⁰

Hartshorne chooses to identify this third category, the psychical language we use to describe God, with the traditional

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp. 155-56. This point is discussed in greater detail later on.

category of analogy. In so doing he invites a comparison of his views with the traditional conceptualizations. Before this can happen, though, we must set out his own views in greater detail.

Hartshorne's Use of Analogy

As implied in the preceding paragraphs, process thought uses analogical concepts as it engages in the general attempt of all metaphysics, to discover the basic ideas which apply to all reality. It is through analogy that these basic ideas are formulated and expressed. Hartshorne is well aware that in philosophical circles today the prevalent idea is that all metaphysical assertions--especially analogies--are "confused or inconsistent applications of words which in more normal application make good sense."¹²¹ Hartshorne would agree that this is true about a great many of such assertions made in the past, but the fault lies with the particular assertions and not with the method as such. If analogies are properly constituted, there is no reason why they cannot convey necessary metaphysical truths.

The problem in establishing analogies lies with the adequacy of everyday language to express universal ideas. Everyday language has a built-in anthropomorphic bias. Our language, because it is our language, is mostly concerned with ourselves and our own experience, with human purpose and feeling, not with universal experience. Metaphysics attempts to transcend this limitation by establishing definitions which are as highly generalized as possible. Still, there

¹²¹Ibid., p. 134.

is always something slightly abnormal about metaphysical language.¹²²

It is this abnormality which may have kept agreement from being reached before now, but the difficulty in forming metaphysical assertions is grammatical, not factual.

Since human terms acquire their meanings through human experience, we cannot avoid a certain amount of anthropomorphism as we use human language to discuss non-human things. Anthropomorphisms have in the past been one horn of a dilemma. Either we try to understand things in terms of our own experience and nature and, thereby, risk failing to see their difference from us, or else we try to interpret them in ways totally alien to our experience and nature and discover that this is the same as having no idea of them at all. The only clear alternative to some degree of anthropomorphism is the notion of an absolutely unknowable 'thing-in-itself.' Hartshorne puts the argument in favor of an anthropomorphic element in language by saying:

What things are for us, what we can get out of them, do with them, enjoy in the experiences of them, that we can know. Also what they may be as analogous to ourselves, like us, knowing, willing, loving beings--though perhaps less or more knowing, willing less or more powerfully, loving less or more comprehensively--all this we can conceive.¹²³

Whether we can conceive much else about them, Hartshorne goes on to point out, is doubtful. Analogical conceptualization and predication is, therefore, a necessity.

¹²²Ibid., p. 143.

¹²³Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 88.

Process analogies are contrasts based on similarity and dissimilarity. The analogues in question possess a common attribute or participate in a common characteristic, but they possess it or participate in it in diverse ways. With regard to similarity, we cannot say that when a common term is used with both a divine and a human reference, that the two uses of the term have no continuity of meaning. There must be some relationship between divine and human goodness or else we are talking nonsense when we call both God and man good. As regards dissimilarity, we cannot claim that goodness means exactly the same thing when we call God and man good. If it did, it would be pointless to speak of divine and human goodness. There would just be goodness.

Both similarity and dissimilarity are indispensable to analogical comparison. This is obviously true of dissimilarity, but according to Hartshorne,

. . . where there are no definite common aspects, there are no definite contrasts either. For instance, if God in no sense has magnitude or parts then he cannot be contrasted as quantitatively infinite rather than finite; and if he also has no common qualities with creatures, then he cannot be contrasted with them as, in a different sense, qualitatively infinite either.¹²⁴

To return to the illustration 'good,' if we say that God is supremely good, then the least that we are saying is that he is good. And if we go further to say that he is goodness itself, then goodness must have some meaning in common with its other uses or else it is unintelligible. There can be no contrast without continuity, no

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 140.

dissimilarity without similarity. Although metaphysics seeks ideas which can apply to all things, it does not seek to eliminate the contrasts that can exist within the common ideas.¹²⁵

The point scarcely needs repeating. To speak clearly when one predicates a term with reference to both God and man, there must be a genuine continuity of meaning between the two uses of the term. Such a continuity in no way denies radically diverse participation in or exemplification of the term. To insure that this is understood, we should point out what Hartshorne often takes for granted, that it is metaphysical similarity he is describing. The similarity is conceptual only. The diversity occurs in the actualization.

In accordance with classical metaphysics, Hartshorne is obviously trying to make his way past the dangers of univocity and equivocity. While he recognizes that others have been doing the same thing, he feels that they have done better in avoiding the former than the latter. He says quite pointedly that the "line between equivocal meanings and the so-called 'analogical' ones is not so well-drawn in orthodox systems that it can be seen at all by most of us who are not adherents of such systems."¹²⁶ For example, there seems to be no difference between equivocity and analogy when theologians contend that only God or other entities literally possess a particular attribute. Tillich's assertion that only creatures literally exist

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 119.

and that God is beyond the category of being, is an example of this. To say that God is not 'a being' but rather 'being itself' only compounds the problem. Can 'being itself' be other than being? If 'being itself' is not an instance of being, then the phrase is simply bad grammar.¹²⁷ Similarly, to say with some theologians that only God truly (ie. literally) creates, says nothing intelligible about God since the creator can have no other references. We might as well not use the word at all.¹²⁸ There must be some real relationship between the divine and non-divine predication of a common term. Hartshorne goes as far as to say, "If there is in no sense any univocal meaning then theology is pure sophistry."¹²⁹

This "real relationship" of which Hartshorne speaks, is expressed by him in this way:

Whatever is good in the creation is, in superior or eminent fashion, 'analogically not univocally' the property

¹²⁷Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 119.

¹²⁸Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 140. Elsewhere, Hartshorne is equally as hard on Tillich. He says that Tillich's doctrine of the symbolic character of all theological language is a concession to negative theology and, therefore, can be in the same way as saying nothing at all about God. He questions whether this is a reflection of genuine humility or "unwitting blasphemy" to deny that God possesses any intelligible attributes. His attack on negative theology is scathing. "We dare not forbid God to sustain relations, to accept the definiteness that comes through limits, to respond to the creatures and thus to be influenced by them Is this modesty or is it monstrous presumption? Have we this veto power upon divinity? Not to sustain relationships, not to respond sensitively to the existence of others is to be wooden, stupid and an utterly empty abstraction The modesty of negative theology is highly suspect. It puts an infinite human veto upon the wealth of the divine life, cutting it off from all but the purely abstract." Op. cit., pp. 151, 153.

¹²⁹Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 194.

of God. Thus, knowledge, purpose, life, love, joy are deficiently present in us, eminently and analogically present in God. It is only in this manner that the idea of God acquires any positive meaning controllable by analysis, yet free from anthropomorphic crudities.¹³⁰

He expands and illustrates what this means by saying:

God can be conceived as the infinite degree--or such form of maximality as is possible--of what is applicable in finite degree to man, and man as the finite degree of whatever variable are infinitely applicable to God. For instance, God is not unchanging while man changes, but God changes in a manner as different from human change as is possible while yet being properly called change. If change is varied as much as possible between the two, while yet retaining its generic identity as change, then both unity and diversity in the relationship will be provided for.¹³¹

What both these statements make clear is that when Hartshorne predicates a common attribute both of God and other entities, the analogy established between the two is that of God possessing the attribute in an eminent, perfect way and the creature possessing it in a deficient, imperfect way.

The question immediately comes to mind, How do we come to our understanding of the meaning of the common term? Do we start with our awareness of ourselves and go up from there, amplifying a creaturely attribute until it has divine dimensions, or do we start with God's revelation of himself and from there work our way down to creaturely connotations? Hartshorne believes that both procedures are at work. Our awareness of God is not just an extension of our

¹³⁰ Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 77.

¹³¹ Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., p. 220.

awareness of ourselves even though this is involved. Our awareness of ourselves is not just a drastic denegation of our awareness of God. Both are indispensable elements of each other. The divine-human contrast is the basis of all human thought and talk, whether it be of God or of persons.¹³²

Again we may look to Hartshorne's predication of the word 'know' as an example. He asks, "Does our concept of 'know' come merely from extra-human experience, analogically extended to what is below and above the human, or does the concept come partly from religious experience, from some dim but direct awareness of deity?" He answers by saying:

I really believe that we know what 'knowledge' is partly by knowing God, and that though it is true that we form our experience of divine knowledge by analogical extension from our human knowledge, this is not the whole truth, the other side of the matter being that we form our idea of human knowledge by exploiting the intuition . . . which we have of God.¹³³

By this method we know what 'know' ought to mean. As we said earlier, it means having conclusive evidence so as to exclude a possibility of error. This obviously would be perfect knowledge, or omniscience, and defines what God's knowledge is. Our knowledge is at best fragmentary and incomplete. It is impossible to understand fully the meaning of terms within man's experience alone. Only God's experience is complete. His experience defines what knowing is. He

¹³²Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 156.

¹³³Ibid., p. 155.

alone knows.¹³⁴ The contrast between divine and non-divine knowledge is one of breadth and depth. With regard to the breadth of God's knowledge, it is perfect because he knows all entities. Nothing escapes his knowing it. He knows all that can possibly be known. Non-divine knowledge has far less scope because only a few things are known by any entity. Likewise, as concerns depth, he knows all entities intimately. There is nothing about them that escapes his knowing. Even at its best, non-divine knowledge is superficial. We never know anything or anyone completely.

This is true of all metaphysical categories for they essentially refer, with whatever meaning they have, directly to God.¹³⁵ Love is another example of this. We are justified in saying that we love, but how perfect is our love? We are at best apathetic toward most things and even the love we have for the few things we do love, is diminished by our own feelings of envy, fear, jealousy, irritation. Only God loves "without any distorting antipathies or blind spots of mere indifference."¹³⁶ God's love is the norm for human love. We do not come to our understanding of this just by negating all the limitations of creaturely love and then inferring God's love. Rather, we can come to know God's love by our direct, even though imperfect, experience of that love, an experience provided us through the receiving of initial aims for each moment of our lives.

¹³⁴Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit., p. 36.

¹³⁵Hartshorne, "Tillich's Doctrine of God," op. cit., p. 191.

¹³⁶Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 156.

With regard to God's eminent possession of an attribute, it is of extreme importance to Hartshorne that he stress God's not being a "mere case under the categories, nor yet a mere exception to them" He is the categories in their "pure or unqualified meaning."¹³⁷ The difference between God's manifestation of the categories and non-divine manifestation is an "essential" one, a "difference in principle, not merely in degree." Hartshorne calls this 'categorical supremacy.' It is this "superiority in principle" which means that God and he alone can be literally described by an attribute, for "God's participation in attributes is not a matter of degree but of sheer possession--complete and universal possession. The attributes of God are in themselves the generic forms of the attributes."¹³⁸

Hartshorne's understanding of God's having categorical supremacy differs from Whitehead's understanding of God being the "supreme instance" or "chief exemplification" of a category at precisely this point. For Hartshorne, God's eminence is having the generic form of the attribute; for Whitehead the generic form is beyond God. This is particularly true with reference to creativity, and we shall look at this presently. Before doing so, however, there is one additional issue to be mentioned briefly.

Earlier we discussed God's dipolarity, his 'dual transcendence.'¹³⁹ At this time, we mentioned that God's dipolarity was

¹³⁷ Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 139.

¹³⁸ Hartshorne, "Tillich's Doctrine of God," op. cit., pp. 181, 183.

¹³⁹ See above, p. 149.

supreme dipolarity and that he surpasses every other instance of dipolarity and that he surpasses every other instance of dipolarity in every aspect of both his poles. Hartshorne, continuing his fight against the 'monopolar prejudice,' insists that analogies be permitted with attributes belonging to both God's poles and not just one pole.

He says:

God is universal cause, creative of everything whatever; but as reality itself, God is likewise universal effect, influenced by everything whatever. It is the universality, the coincidence with reality in its polar aspects which makes God supreme.¹⁴⁰

He goes so far as to say that the "real trouble" with an analogy in the past has been "in the idolatry of infinity, being, cause, and absoluteness, accepted as substitutes for the divine unity of the contraries, finite-infinite, being-creativity, cause-effect, absolute-relational, being as such and a being."¹⁴¹ We are, therefore, justified in setting up analogies which involve both aspects of God's dipolarity.

Two conspicuous illustrations of this, which we have already discussed, are the mind-body analogy and the social analogy.¹⁴² Hartshorne indicates that these two analogies used together gives an excellent model for understanding God's relationship to the world. The mind-body analogy expresses the immediacy of that relationship but does not say anything about the nature of that relationship. The social relationship describes this by indicating that it is not a relationship of mind to matter only, but a relationship of mind to mind

¹⁴⁰ Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 150.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 157.

¹⁴² See above, pages 168-173.

as well.¹⁴³ Hartshorne also mentions the importance of the 'person-analogy' as an essential trait for religion. "Man is said to be created in the divine image. Without this analogy religion loses an essential trait There can be no analogy between persons and something wholly absolute, self-sufficient, infinite, or immutable."¹⁴⁴

The 'Analogy of Creativity'

At the basis of Thomist analogy, as we saw, is the notion of analogia entis--the analogy of being.¹⁴⁵ The basic relationship between God and other entities is that they have being. Because of this fundamental relationship, other relationships exist between them. The analogia entis is an analogy of intrinsic denomination. Both God and other entities possess being with God, possessing it essentially and other entities possessing it by participation which implies possessing it in a deficient or limited way. In the analogia entis God is always the prime analogate, so the analogy is always unum ad alternum. The analogia entis is established by God's creative act wherein he causes other entities to have their being according to the principle omne agens agit simile sibi. This being is not, however, a carbon copy of his being. Although not identical to his being, the being he gives is, nonetheless, genuine being.

¹⁴³Hartshorne, Man's Vision of God, op. cit., pp. 186-88.

¹⁴⁴Hartshorne, "The God of Religion and the God of Philosophy," op. cit., p. 152.

¹⁴⁵See above, pages 315-16.

Hartshorne's discussion of creativity parallels what Thomas says about being. We have already shown how 'becoming' in process thought, occupies the same place as 'being' does in Thomism.¹⁴⁶ We noted Hartshorne's insistence that creativity be regarded as an analogical concept functioning in process thought the same way that being functions in Thomist thinking.¹⁴⁷ We went further to clarify that becoming could also be spoken of as creating and that God must be regarded as 'Creativity itself' in process thinking just as he is regarded as 'Being itself' in Thomist thought.¹⁴⁸ All other creativity is dependent on and derivative from divine creativity. Are we not, therefore, justified, in saying that Hartshorne's basic analogy is an 'analogy of creativity'? Divine creativity is the generic form of creativity. It defines what creativity really is, and there is no creativity transcending divine creativity. This creativity is given to other creatures through God's creative act. Other entities then possess the creativity appropriate for their own self-creative process. Their creativity is not equal nor identical to divine creativity, but it is authentically creativity because it does enable them to be self-creators. This creativity is truly God's gift of becoming.' God is the cause, the giver of creativity to others, and it is an appropriate gift because, as Creativity itself, he produces something in creatures similar to himself. Both God and other creatures can properly and analogically be called creator-creatures.

¹⁴⁶ See above, page 192.

¹⁴⁷ See above, pages 192-93.

¹⁴⁸ See above, page 193.

"All actualities are self-created creatures. Creativity is analogical, not just univocal, in that it is both divine and non-divine."¹⁴⁹

We took note earlier of the Thomists' inability to agree among themselves as to whether the analogia entis was an analogy of intrinsic attribution or proportionality. It would be every bit as difficult to decide this with reference to Hartshorne's analogy of creativity for the same tension is there.

Those in the Thomist tradition who advocate proportionality do so on the basis that as analogy of relations, it guarantees the ontological discontinuity between God and other entities. This, as we have seen repeatedly, is a major emphasis with Hartshorne. At the risk of being redundant, we provide yet another statement illustrating this:

Some will say that . . . I (Hartshorne) have overlooked the infinite gulf between God and the creatures. But not so. Between the finite-infinite individual and the merely finite individuals, there is a gap in nature which is literally infinite. And between the divine cause-effect which influences and is influenced by every reality, and ordinary cause-effect which, since they begin to be at a certain stage of the creative advance of existence, are exclusively causes of what comes after, and which also, since they must die at a later stage, will be exclusively effects of what came before, there is again a doubly infinite distinction. God both infinitely precedes and infinitely outlasts every other individual so that all are influenced by and also influence his actuality.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Hartshorne, Whitehead's Philosophy, op. cit., p. 192.

¹⁵⁰ Hartshorne, Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method, op. cit., p. 156.

Hartshorne is consistently careful in his speaking to indicate that in his comparisons one thing is "like" another. This likeness consists in the adherence to a model, not in any ontological similarity. The life of a cabbage is not the same as the life of God except both can be described by the model of creative synthesis.

On the other hand, Hartshorne has insisted on a "certain univocity" in analogy, and this is what intrinsic attribution provides. All analogates possess the analogue in question but in a way appropriate to their nature. God and other entities are genuinely creator-creatures. This term has a clear referent to their self-creative synthesis. The superiority of the process analogy of creativity is the precision with which the terms creativity is used. As was noted, it is almost impossible with some thinkers to establish any meaning when they say God is a creator because of the vagueness of what the term could mean when spoken of God. In process it simply means that he has his own self-creative process and has the generic form of that process, the process "from which everything is abstracted or within which everything that is bounded has its limits."¹⁵¹

In light of the fact that God's creativity is the generic form of creativity and his self-creative synthesis is appropriate for this and that all other entities have self-creative synthesis which are appropriate to their nature, it is all but impossible to choose between proportionality and intrinsic attribution. Fortunately

¹⁵¹Hartshorne, "Tillich's Doctrine of God," op. cit., p. 170.

such a decision does not have to be made for there is a way of combining them.

Our conclusion about the proper understanding of the analogia entis was that it had to be regarded as more fluid and flexible than many interpreters would want and that no one analogy was adequate to deal with the complexity of our understanding of the relationship between the divine and non-divine. The same conclusion should be reached about the analogy of creativity. There is no one correct way to read it. We need to find a model which combines the two understandings of analogy if we are to read the analogy of creativity properly. This we have already found in Mascall's model.

In this model the analogy between God and all others is the analogy of proportionality combined with the analogy of attribution unium ad alterum. The analogy between entities other than God is the analogy of proportionality combined with the analogy of attribution duorum ad tertium. It is God's creative act which establishes the analogies between him and all other entities. The analogy of creativity will read that God creates the creativity of other creator-creatures and thus creates them a relationship with himself, wherein their creativity is genuine but radically different from his. The creativity of all entities other than God can be compared only in light of the divine creativity which utterly transcends all other forms. The importance of God's creative act must be stressed again. He creates the creature's creativity. Because he is Creativity itself, the creativity he creates resembles his

creativity but is not identical to it. There is always the sharp, decisive contrast between the perfect, supreme, generic form of creativity and the deficient, derivative, non-generic forms. God's creativity is appropriate for his being God; all other entities' creativity is appropriate for their being what God creates them to become.

The 'Analogy of Creativity' and the 'Analogia Fidei'

We have been comparing Hartshorne's concept and use of analogy with those of the Thomists. Even though there is a fundamental difference as to what should be the basic analogy (being or creativity), there is considerable compatibility. This is not the case, however, when we compare Hartshorne's views with those of the Reformed tradition, particularly those of Karl Barth.¹⁵²

In spite of an agreement in intent to avoid univocity and equivocity (or parity and disparity, as Barth calls them), the incompatibility is basic. For Hartshorne, as he has been interpreted here, the fundamental analogy is the analogy of creativity. For Barth, it is the analogy of faith. This indicates that the fundamental analogical relationship between God and other entities is established in completely different ways. Hartshorne sees it happening through God's creativity, wherein he gives others their creativity. Barth regards it as part of God's redemptive act, being established solely by the grace of God. Hartshorne finds it possible for persons to know something of God's creativity

¹⁵²See above, page 340 ff.

through the things he creates, the self-creative creatures. Barth believes that all knowledge of God comes through divine revelation. While both (in practice if not in theory with respect to Barth) do understand their analogies as expressing relationships and, thereby, qualifying to be called analogies of proportionality, they do not agree as to the nature of the attribution involved. For Hartshorne, it is intrinsic. All entities are genuinely creator-creatures. For Barth, all comparisons are extrinsic. The attribute is only imputed to the creature and belongs properly only to God. Hartshorne would insist that God is the generic form of all his attributes, but this does not mean that other entities cannot possess these attributes. Barth would insist that the attributes can in no way belong to the creature other than by God's allowing the terms to be used of the creature. While Hartshorne feels that his analogical predication gives a clear understanding of what 'creator' and 'creature' mean when predicated of God, Barth insists that even though revelation is an unveiling, it is also a veiling and the truth of God can only be expressed in a hidden form. Finally, and perhaps of most importance, Barth could not accept Hartshorne's concept of a dually transcendent God; therefore, analogies embracing both aspects of God's dipolarity, would not be formulated. To think of God as a creator-creature, even the creator-creature would be impossible for Barth.

The gap between the analogia fidei and the analogy of creativity is probably too wide to be bridged. Barth's hostility toward metaphysics

in general would not be overcome by Hartshorne's particular defense of it. Hartshorne's refusal to rely completely on revelation for our knowledge of God has not been changed by his reading of Barth. Furthermore, Barth emphatically rejects Quenstedt's interpretation of the analogia entis (intrinsic attribution) because it reduces "the infinite qualitative difference" between God and man, to a quantitative one. He would most assuredly be unconvinced that Hartshorne has not done this as well. The two emphasize the contrasting aspects of analogy. For Barth emphasizing disparity between God and all else is most important; for Hartshorne emphasizing the similarity predominates. Little would be gained, therefore, by manipulating the thinking of these two men so some agreement could be found. Any unity, other than their mutual desire to speak analogically, would be contrived.

Conclusion

Hartshorne feels that his conceptualization and use of analogy is superior to others because of its clarity. He is careful to insure that terms predicated of divine and non-divine actuality are comprehensible in both instances. With regard to creativity, we know what it means to be self-created creatures for we have the model of creative synthesis to explain this. God is categorically supreme because his self-creative process is the generic form of creative synthesis. He is Creativity itself. Other actualities are instances of creativity because God chooses to create them as self-creators.

Hartshorne makes every effort to maintain balance between speaking univocally or equivocally, but since he considers the latter

as being the greater problem in thinking of others, he lays stress on the continuity of meaning. It is possible therefore, to feel that he may have tipped the scales too far toward univocity. That is not this author's opinion, however. While Hartshorne's analogy of creativity on the one hand is intrinsic attribution, it is on the other hand, proportionality. As Hartshorne is able to speak with both of these in mind, he does make clear and cogent analogical predication.

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